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WITH BOTH ARMIES
IN SOUTH AFRICA

President Steyn on his way to Sand River Battle.

[illegible] Sand River Battle.

WITH BOTH ARMIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

BY

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS, F.R.G.S.

AUTHOR OF "THE CUBAN AND PORTO RICAN CAMPAIGNS," "CUBA IN WAR TIME," "SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE," "GALLEGHER AND OTHER STORIES," ETC.

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WITH BOTH ARMIES

CHAPTER I

WITH BULLER'S COLUMN

"WERE you the station-master here before this?" I asked the man in the straw hat, at Colenso. "I mean before this war?"

"What! I? No fear!" snorted the station-master, scornfully. "Why, we didn't know Colenso was on the line until Buller came and fought a battle here—that's how it is with all these way-stations now. Everybody's talking about them. We never took no notice to them."

And yet the arriving stranger might have been forgiven his point of view and his start of surprise when he found Chieveley a place of only a half dozen corrugated zinc huts, and Colenso a scattered gathering of a dozen shattered houses of battered brick.

Chieveley seemed so insignificant in contrast with its fame to those who had followed the war on maps and in the newspapers, that one was not sure he was on the right road until he saw from the car-window the armored train still lying on the embankment, the graves beside it, and the donga into which Winston Churchill pulled and carried the wounded.

And as the train bumped and halted before the blue and white enamel sign that marks Colenso station, the places which have made that spot familiar and momentous fell into line like the buoys which mark the entrance to a harbor.

We knew that the high bare ridge to the right must be Fort Wylie, that the plain on the left was where Colonel Long had lost his artillery, and three officers gained the Victoria Cross, and that the swift, muddy stream, in which the iron railroad bridge lay humped and sprawling, was the Tugela River.

Six hours before, at Frere Station, the station-master had awakened us to say that Ladysmith would be relieved at any moment. This had but just come over the wire. It was "official." Indeed, he added, with local pride, that

the village band was still awake and in readiness to celebrate the imminent event. He found, I fear, an unsympathetic audience. The train was carrying philanthropic gentlemen in charge of stores of champagne and marmalade for the besieged city. They did not want it to be relieved until they were there to substitute *Pâté de foie gras* for horseflesh. And there were officers, too, who wanted a "look in," and who had been kept waiting at Cape Town for commissions, gladdening the guests of the Mount Nelson Hotel the while, with their new khaki and gaiters, and there were Tommies who wanted "Relief of Ladysmith" on the clasp of their medal, as they had seen "Relief of Lucknow" on the medal of the Chelsea pensioners. And there was a correspondent who had journeyed 15,000 miles to see Ladysmith relieved, and who was apparently going to miss that sight, after five weeks of travel, by a margin of five hours.

We all growled "That's good," as we had done for the last two weeks every time we had heard it was relieved, but our tone was not enthusiastic. And when the captain of the Natal Carbineers said, "I am afraid the good news is

too premature," we all said, hopefully, we were afraid it was.

We had seen nothing yet that was like real war. That night at Pietermaritzburg the officers at the hotel were in mess-jackets, the officers' wives in dinner-gowns. It was like Shepheard's Hotel, at the top of the season. But only six hours after that dinner, as we looked out of the car-windows, we saw galloping across the high grass, like men who had lost their way, and silhouetted black against the red sunrise, countless horsemen scouting ahead of our train, and guarding it against the fate of the armored one lying wrecked at Chieveley. The darkness was still heavy on the land and the only lights were the red eyes of the armored train creeping in advance of ours, and the red sun, which showed our silent escort appearing suddenly against the skyline on a ridge, or galloping toward us through the dew to order us, with a wave of the hand, to greater speed. One hour after sunrise the train drew up at Colenso, and from only a mile away we heard the heavy thud of the naval guns, the hammering of the Boer "pom-poms," and the Maxims and Colt automatics spanking the air. We smiled at each

other guiltily. We were on time. It was most evident that Ladysmith had *not* been relieved.

This was the twelfth day of a battle that Buller's column was waging against the Boers and their mountain ranges, or "disarranges," as someone described them, without having gained more than three miles of hostile territory. He had tried to force his way through them six times, and had been repulsed six times. And now he was to try it again.

No map, nor photograph, nor written description can give an idea of the country which lay between Buller and his goal. It was an eruption of high hills, linked together at every point without order or sequence. In most countries mountains and hills follow some natural law. The Cordilleras can be traced from the Amazon River to Guatemala City; they make the water-shed of two continents; the Great Divide forms the backbone of the States, but these Natal hills have no lineal descent. They are illegitimate children of no line, abandoned broadcast over the country, with no family likeness and no home. They stand alone, or shoulder to shoulder, or at right angles, or at a tangent, or join hands across a

valley. They never appear the same; some run to a sharp point, some stretch out, forming a table-land, others are gigantic ant-hills, others perfect and accurately modelled ramparts. In a ride of half a mile, every hill completely loses its original aspect and character.

They hide each other, or disguise each other. Each can be enfiladed by the other, and not one gives up the secret of its strategic value until its crest has been carried by the bayonet. To add to this confusion, the river Tugela has selected the hills around Ladysmith as occupying the country through which it will endeavor to throw off its pursuers. It darts through them as though striving to escape, it doubles on its tracks, it sinks out of sight between them, and in the open plain rises to the dignity of water-falls. It runs up hill, and remains motionless on an incline, and on the level ground twists and turns so frequently that when one says he has crossed the Tugela, he means he has crossed it once at a drift, once at the wrecked railroad bridge, and once over a pontoon. And then he is not sure that he is not still on the same side from which he started.

Pontoon Bridge Across the Tugela.

The trooper is rescuing his equipment from his dead horse.

Some of these hills are green, but the greater part are a yellow or dark red, against which at two hundred yards a man in khaki is indistinguishable from the rocks around him. Indeed, the khaki is the English soldier's sole protection. It saves him in spite of himself, for he apparently cannot learn to advance under cover, and a skyline is the one place where he selects to stand erect and stretch his weary limbs. I have come to within a hundred yards of a hill before I saw that, scattered among its red and yellow bowlders was the better part of a regiment, as closely packed together as the crowd on the bleaching boards at a baseball match.

Into this maze and confusion of nature's fortifications Buller's column has been twisting and turning, marching and countermarching, capturing one position after another, to find it was enfiladed from many hills, and abandoning it, only to retake it a week later. The greater part of the column has abandoned its tents and is bivouacking in the open. It is a wonderful and impressive sight. At the first view, an army in being, when it is spread out as it is in the Tugela basin back of the hills,

seems a hopelessly and irrevocably entangled mob.

An army in the field is not regiments of armed men, marching with a gun on shoulder, or crouching behind trenches. That is the least, even if it seems the most, important part of it. Before one reaches the firing-line he must pass villages of men, camps of men, bivouacs of men, who are feeding, mending, repairing, and burying the men at the "front." It is these latter that make the mob of gypsies, which is apparently without head or order or organization. They stretched across the great basin of the Tugela, like the children of Israel, their camp-fires rising to the sky at night like the reflection of great search-lights; by day they swarmed across the plain, like hundreds of moving circus-vans in every direction, with as little obvious intention as herds of buffalo. But each had his appointed work, and each was utterly indifferent to the battle going forward a mile away. Hundreds of teams, of sixteen oxen each, crawled like great black water-snakes across the drifts, the Kaffir drivers, naked and black, lashing them with whips as long as lariats, shrieking, beseeching, and

howling, and falling upon the oxen's horns to drag them into place.

Mules from Spain and Texas, loaded with ammunition, kicked and plunged, more oxen drew more soberly the great naval guns, which lurched as though in a heavy sea, throwing the blue-jackets who hung upon the drag-ropes from one high side of the trail to the other. Across the plain, and making toward the trail, wagons loaded with fodder, with rations, with camp equipment, with tents and cooking-stoves, crowded each other as closely as cable-cars on Broadway. Scattered among them were fixed lines of tethered horses, rows of dog-tents, camps of Kaffirs, hospital stations with the Red Cross waving from the nearest and highest tree. Dripping water-carts with as many spigots as the regiment had companies, howitzer guns guided by as many ropes as a May-pole, crowded past these to the trail, or gave way to the ambulances filled with men half dressed and bound in the zinc-blue bandages that made the color detestable forever after. Troops of the irregular horse gallop through this multitude, with a jangling of spurs and sling-belts; and Tom-

mies, in close order, fight their way among the oxen, or help pull them to one side as the stretchers pass, each with its burden, each with its blue bandage stained a dark brownish crimson. It is only when the figure on the stretcher lies under a blanket that the tumult and push and sweltering mass comes to a quick pause, while the dead man's comrade stands at attention, and the officer raises his fingers to his helmet. Then the mass surges on again, with cracking of whips and shouts and imprecations, while the yellow dust rises in thick clouds and buries the picture in a glaring fog. This moving, struggling mass, that fights for the right of way along the road, is within easy distance of the shells. Those from their own guns pass over them with a shrill crescendo, those from the enemy burst among them at rare intervals, or sink impotently in the soft soil. And a dozen Tommies rush to dig them out as keepsakes. Up at the front, brown and yellow regiments are lying crouched behind brown and yellow rocks and stones. As far as you can see, the hills are sown with them. With a glass you can distinguish them against the skyline of every hill, for over three

miles away. Sometimes the men rise and fire, and there is a feverish flutter of musketry; sometimes they lie motionless for hours while the guns make the ways straight.

Anyone who has seen Epsom Downs on a Derby day, with its thousands of vans and tents and lines of horses and moving mobs, can form some idea of what it is like. But while at the Derby all is interest and excitement, and everyone is pushing and struggling, and the air palpitates with the intoxication of a great event, the winning of a horse-race—here, where men are killed every hour and no one of them knows when his turn may come, the fact that most impresses you is their indifference to it all. What strikes you most is the bored air of the Tommies, the undivided interest of the engineers in the construction of a pontoon bridge, the solicitude of the medical staff over the long lines of wounded, the rage of the naked Kaffirs at their lumbering steers; the fact that everyone is intent on something—anything—but the battle.

They are wearied with battles. The Tommies stretch themselves in the sun to dry the wet khaki in which they have lain out in the cold

night for weeks, and yawn at battles. Or, if you climb to the hill where the officers are seated, you will find men steeped even deeper in boredom. They are burned a dark red; their brown mustaches look white by contrast; theirs are the same faces you have met with in Piccadilly, which you see across the tables of the Savoy restaurant, which gaze depressedly from the windows of White's and the Bachelors' Club. If they were bored then, they are unbearably bored now. Below them the men of their regiment lie crouched amid the bowlders, hardly distinguishable from the brown and yellow rock. They are sleeping, or dozing, or yawning. A shell passes over them like the shaking of many telegraph wires, and neither officer nor Tommy raises his head to watch it strike. They are tired in body and in mind, with cramped limbs and aching eyes. They have had twelve nights and twelve days of battle, and it has lost its power to amuse.

When the sergeants call the companies together, they are eager enough. Anything is better than lying still looking up at the sunny, inscrutable hills, or down into the plain crawling with black oxen.

Among the group of staff officers someone has lost a cigar-holder. It has slipped from between his fingers, and, with the vindictiveness of inanimate things, has slid and jumped under a pile of rocks. The interest of all around is instantly centred on the lost cigar-holder. The Tommies begin to roll the rocks away, endangering the limbs of the men below them, and half the kopje is obliterated. They are as keen as terriers after a rat. The officers sit above and give advice and disagree as to where that cigar-holder hid itself. Over their heads, not twenty feet above, the shells chase each other fiercely. But the officers have become accustomed to shells; a search for a lost cigar-holder, which is going on under their very eyes, is of greater interest. And when at last a Tommy pounces upon it with a laugh of triumph, the officers look their disappointment, and, with a sigh of resignation, pick up their field-glasses.

It is all a question of familiarity. On Broadway, if a building is going up where there is a chance of a loose brick falling on someone's head, the contractor puts up red signs marked "Danger!" and you dodge over to the other side. But if you had been in battle for twelve

days, as have the soldiers of Buller's column, passing shells would interest you no more than do passing cable-cars. After twelve days you would forget that shells are dangerous even as you forget when crossing Broadway that cable-cars can kill and mangle.

Up on the highest hill, seated among the highest rocks, are General Buller and his staff. The hill is all of rocks, sharp, brown rocks, as clearly cut as foundation-stones. They are thrown about at irregular angles, and are shaded only by stiff bayonet-like cacti. Above is a blue, glaring sky, into which the top of the kopje seems to reach, and to draw and concentrate upon itself all of the sun's heat. This little jagged point of blistering rocks holds the forces that press the button which sets the struggling mass below, and the thousands of men upon the surrounding hills, in motion. It is the conning tower of the relief column, only, unlike a conning tower, it offers no protection, no seclusion, no peace. To-day, commanding generals, under the new conditions which this war has developed, do not charge up hills waving flashing swords. They sit on rocks, and wink out their orders by a flashing hand-mir-

An Army in Being.

Buller's column after the Battle of Colenso at Frere. (From a photograph copyrighted by B. W. Caney.)

ror. The swords have been left at the base, or coated deep with mud, so that they shall not flash, and with this column everyone, under the rank of general, carries a rifle on purpose to disguise the fact that he is entitled to carry a sword. The kopje is the central station of the system. From its uncomfortable eminence the commanding general watches the developments of his attack, and directs it by heliograph and ragged bits of bunting. A sweating, dirty Tommy turns his back on a hill a mile away and slaps the air with his signal flag ; another Tommy, with the front visor of his helmet cocked over the back of his neck, watches an answering bit of bunting through a glass. The bit of bunting, a mile away, flashes impatiently, once to the right and once to the left, and the Tommy with the glass says, " They understand, sir," and the other Tommy, who has not as yet cast even an interested glance at the regiment he has ordered into action, folds his flag and curls up against a hot rock and instantly sleeps.

Stuck on the crest, twenty feet from where General Buller is seated, are two iron rods, like those in the putting-green of a golf course. They mark the line of direction which a shell

must take, in order to seek out the enemy. Back of the kopje, where they cannot see the enemy, where they cannot even see the hill upon which he is intrenched, are the howitzers. Their duty is to aim at the iron rods, and vary their aim to either side of them as they are directed to do by an officer on the crest. Their shells pass a few yards over the heads of the staff, but the staff has confidence. Those three yards are as safe a margin as a hundred. Their confidence is that of the lady in spangles at a music-hall, who permits her husband in buckskin to shoot apples from the top of her head. From the other direction come the shells of the Boers, seeking out the hidden howitzers. They pass somewhat higher, crashing into the base of the kopje, sometimes killing, sometimes digging their own ignominious graves. The staff regard them with the same indifference. One of them tears the overcoat upon which Colonel Stuart-Wortley is seated, another destroys his diary. His men, lying at his feet among the red rocks, observe this with wide eyes. But he does not shift his position. His answer is, that his men cannot shift theirs.

On Friday, February 23d, the Inniskillings,

Dublins, and Connaughts were sent out to take a trench, half-way up Railway Hill. The attack was one of those frontal attacks which, in this war, against the new weapons, have added so much to the lists of killed and wounded and to the prestige of the men, while it has, in an inverse ratio, hurt the prestige of the men by whom the attack was ordered. The result of this attack was peculiarly disastrous. It was made at night, and as soon as it developed, the Boers retreated to the trenches on the crest of the hill, and threw men around the sides to bring a cross-fire to bear on the Englishmen. In the morning the Inniskillings found they had lost four hundred men, and ten out of their fifteen officers. The other regiments lost as heavily. The following Tuesday, which was the anniversary of Majuba Hill, three brigades, instead of a regiment, were told off to take this same Railway Hill, or Pieter's, as it was later called, on the flank, and with it to capture two others. On the same day, nineteen years before, the English had lost Majuba Hill, and their hope was to take these three from the Boers for the one they had lost, and open the way to Bulwana Mountain, which was

the last bar that held them back from Ladysmith.

The first two of the three hills they wanted were shoulder to shoulder, the third was separated from them by a deep ravine. This last was the highest, and in order that the attack should be successful, it was necessary to seize it first. The hills stretched for three miles; they were about one thousand two hundred yards high.

For three hours a single line of men slipped and stumbled forward along the muddy bank of the river, and for three hours the artillery crashed, spluttered, and stabbed at the three hills above them, scattering the rocks and bursting over and behind the Boer trenches on the crest.

As is their custom, the Boers remained invisible and made no reply. And though we knew they were there, it seemed inconceivable that anything human could live under such a bombardment of shot, bullets, and shrapnel. A hundred yards distant, on our right, the navy guns were firing lyddite that burst with a thick yellow smoke; on the other side Colt automatics were put-put-put-ing a stream of bullets;

the field-guns and the howitzers were playing from a hill half a mile behind us, and scattered among the rocks about us, and for two miles on either hand, the infantry in reserve were firing off ammunition at any part of the three hills they happened to dislike!

The roar of the navy's Four-Point-Sevens, their crash, their rush as they passed, the shrill whine of the shrapnel, the barking of the howitzers, and the mechanical, regular rattle of the quick-firing Maxims, which sounded like the clicking of many mowing-machines on a hot summer's day, tore the air with such hideous noises that one's skull ached from the concussion, and one could only be heard by shouting. But more impressive by far than this hot chorus of mighty thunder and petty hammering, was the roar of the wind which was driven down into the valley beneath, and which swept up again in enormous waves of sound. It roared like a wild hurricane at sea. The illusion was so complete, that you expected, by looking down, to see the Tugela lashing at her banks, tossing the spray hundreds of feet in air, and battling with her sides of rock. It was like the roar of Niagara in a gale, and yet when you

did look below, not a leaf was stirring, and the Tugela was slipping forward, flat and sluggish, and in peace.

The long procession of yellow figures was still advancing along the bottom of the valley, toward the right, when on the crest of the farthermost hill fourteen of them appeared suddenly, and ran forward and sprang into the trenches.

Perched against the blue sky on the highest and most distant of the three hills, they looked terribly lonely and insufficient, and they ran about, this way and that, as though they were very much surprised to find themselves where they were. Then they settled down into the Boer trench, from our side of it, and began firing, their officer, as his habit is, standing up behind them. The hill they had taken had evidently been abandoned to them by the enemy, and the fourteen men in khaki had taken it by "default." But they disappeared so suddenly into the trench, that we knew they were not enjoying their new position in peace, and everyone looked below them, to see the arriving reinforcements. They came at last, to the number of ten, and scampered

about just as the others had done, looking for cover. It seemed as if we could almost hear the singing of the bullet when one of them dodged, and it was with a distinct sense of relief, and of freedom from further responsibility, that we saw the ten disappear also, and become part of the yellow stones about them. Then a very wonderful movement began to agitate the men upon the two remaining hills. They began to creep up them as you have seen seaweed rise with the tide and envelop a rock. They moved in regiments, but each man was as distinct as is a letter of the alphabet in each word on this page, black with letters. We began to follow the fortunes of individual letters. It was a most selfish and cowardly occupation, for you knew you were in no greater danger than you would be in looking through the glasses of a mutoscope. The battle unrolled before you like a panorama. The guns on our side of the valley had ceased, the hurricane in the depths below had instantly spent itself, and the birds and insects had again begun to fill our hill with drowsy twitter and song. But on the other, half the men were wrapping the base of the hill in

khaki, which rose higher and higher, growing looser and less tightly wrapt as it spun upward. Half way to the crest there was a broad open space of green grass, and above that a yellow bank of earth, which supported the track of the railroad. This green space spurted with tiny geysers of yellow dust. Where the bullets came from or who sent them we could not see. But the loose ends of the bandage of khaki were stretching across this green space and the yellow spurts of dust rose all around them. The men crossed this fire-zone warily, looking to one side or the other, as the bullets struck the earth heavily, like drops of rain before a shower.

The men had their head and shoulders bent as though they thought a roof was about to fall on them; some ran from rock to rock, seeking cover properly; others scampered toward the safe vantage ground behind the railroad embankment; others advanced leisurely, like men playing golf. The silence, after the hurricane of sounds, was painful; we could not hear even the Boer rifles. The men moved like figures in a dream, without firing a shot. They seemed each to be acting on his

own account, without unison or organization. As I have said, you ceased considering the scattered whole, and became intent on the adventures of individuals. These fell so suddenly, that you waited with great anxiety to learn whether they had dropped to dodge a bullet, or whether one had found them. The men came at last from every side, and from out of every ridge and dried-up waterway. Open spaces which had been green a moment before, were suddenly dyed yellow with them. Where a company had been clinging to the railroad embankment, there stood one regiment holding it, and another sweeping over it. Heights that had seemed the goal, became the resting-place of the stretcher-bearers, until at last no part of the hill remained unpopulated, save a high bulging rampart of unprotected and open ground. And then, suddenly, coming from the earth itself, apparently, one man ran across this open space and leaped on top of the trench which crowned the hill. He was fully fifteen yards in advance of all the rest, entirely unsupported, and alone. And he had evidently planned it so, for he took off his helmet and waved it, and stuck it on his rifle

and waved it again, and then suddenly clapped it on his head and threw his gun to his shoulder. He stood so, pointing down into the trench, and it seemed as though we could hear him calling upon the Boers behind it to surrender.

A few minutes later the last of the three hills was mounted by the West Yorks, who were mistaken by their own artillery for Boers, and fired upon both by the Boers and by their own shrapnel and lyddite. Four men were wounded, and, to save themselves, a line of them stood up at full length on the trench and cheered and waved at the artillery until it had ceased to play upon them. The Boers continued to fire upon them with rifles, for over two hours. But it was only a demonstration to cover the retreat of the greater number, and at daybreak the hills were in complete and peaceful possession of the English. These hills were a part of the same Railway Hill which four nights before the Inniskillings and a composite regiment had attempted to take by a frontal attack, with the loss of six hundred men, among whom were three colonels. By this flank attack, and by using nine regi-

ments instead of one, the same hills and two others were taken with two hundred casualties. The fact that this battle, which was called the Battle of Pieter's Hill, and the surrender of General Cronje and his forces to Lord Roberts, both of which events took place on the anniversary of the battle of Majuba Hill, made the whole of Buller's column feel that the ill memory of that disaster had been effaced.

CHAPTER II

THE SIEGE OF LADYSMITH

TO anyone who has seen Ladysmith, the wonder grows, not only that it was ever relieved, but that it was ever defended. Indeed, had the advice of General Sir George White been followed in the first place, the town would have been abandoned to the Boers. For a garrison at Ladysmith is in a strategic position not unlike that of a bear in a bear-pit at which the boys around the top of the pit are throwing shells instead of buns.

Now that the cards have been played, everyone can see that the natural defence of Natal is at the Tugela River, on the very hills from which the Boers repulsed General Buller at Colenso, at Spion Kop, and at Vaal Krantz.

The fact that the town of Ladysmith lay outside this marvellous breastwork of hills and ridges should have been treated as one of the misfortunes of war, and for the greater good of

Ladysmith.

the greater number the town should have been sacrificed to the enemy, and all the residents and the garrison withdrawn for twelve miles inside the great complex mass of hills which guard the twisted course of the Tugela.

Ladysmith might have been burned, few stores would have been looted, but corrugated iron, which is the chief architectural feature of Ladysmith, is cheap, and the shop-owners could not have lost much more by Boer looting than they did by Boer shells. That would have been the apparent loss; the gain would have been in the releasing of 13,000 troops for service on the Tugela and the freeing of Buller's column of 25,000 men to go where they were needed for the more direct prosecution of the war. Hundreds of lives would have been saved, hundreds of wounded and sick would not have filled the hospitals, and 13,000 men would not have been reduced to skeletons, and need not have been laid by in idleness until they had recovered strength and health. On the other hand, the history of the British Army would have lost a glorious page which has been added by the defenders of Ladysmith, and the record of the stubborn, desperate fighting of the column

coming to the rescue. For no matter who in authority may be criticised for the handling of that column, it did what it was ordered to do as well as it could have been done. That what it was ordered to do was not always what a more quick-thinking, imaginative, and brilliant leader might have deemed best, does not reflect on the men "who went and did" as they were commanded.

The chief difficulties which confronted both General Buller and General White were those of geography.

To protect Ladysmith it was necessary to fortify and guard a circle fully fourteen miles in circumference, and with a force so small that at one time only three hundred and fifty men were available to hold each mile of the ring. Had the Boers been commanded by anyone except General Joubert, had they attacked more frequently, instead of resting content with bombarding, the town would undoubtedly have fallen, for the positions were so widely separated that reinforcing one from another was a matter of the greatest difficulty, and could only have been accomplished after a most dangerous lapse of time.

General Buller for his part was confronted by probably the worst country for attack and the most admirable for defence in South Africa, or in any other continent. The fact that he was two months and fifteen days in advancing twelve miles, or from December 15th to February 28th in progressing from Colenso to Ladysmith, is the best description of the country that anyone could give.

There must have been some most powerful influence against that of General White, and some excellent reasons for the holding of Ladysmith, to overcome the obvious objections to its defence. This influence was probably that which was brought to bear by the Natal Government, and the reason it urged for holding Ladysmith was that were it deserted, the disloyal Dutch in the Colony would look upon such an act as a sign of British weakness and would be encouraged to join or to secretly assist the enemy. At least such a withdrawal would threaten the safety of the Colony by fomenting disaffection and suggesting a loss of British prestige.

So it may have been for "moral effect" that Ladysmith was defended, and in the end the

plucky, undaunted conduct of the besieged garrison was no doubt of excellent moral effect, but if the English had abandoned Ladysmith and held the hills about Colenso instead of allowing the Boers to hold them, Buller's repulse there would not have taken place; and the moral effect of that upon the disloyal Dutch was most unfortunate.

In the *Ladysmith Lyre* and in the *Bomb-shell Poems*, written and printed during the siege, one obtains some very interesting side-lights on the state of mind of those who were then languishing in the "Doomed City," as was its premature epitaph.

It seems that two weeks was the limit originally set by the English for the duration of the siege, but even before that time had passed, and when the Boer guns began to increase upon the surrounding hills, a neutral camp was established four miles from Ladysmith, where the sick and wounded and non-combatants, both women and children, might withdraw and be free from shell-fire. General Joubert himself selected the location of this camp and received General White's promise that there would be no communication between it and

the city except once each day, when the provision train went out with rations under the protection of the Red Cross flag. Of the two places, in spite of the shell-fire, the town would seem to have been much more desirable, for the camp was a literal camp under canvas, out on the flat windy plain, where many hundreds of colonials and natives of India were huddled together without comfort, work, or source of amusement. To the men at least, the neutral camp must have been a place of torment at the time, and it remains a lasting reproach, ready at the hand of an enemy forever after. Indeed, so deeply did the men who remained in Ladysmith make those who had left it for the camp feel their inferiority, that after the siege an official utterance had to clear the air in their behalf, and remind the more valiant who had refused to take refuge in the camp, that those who had done so had been ordered there for the good of the community. But in spite of this, for years to come in Ladysmith the easiest brick to throw at a citizen will be the fact that during the siege he lived with the women and the children in the neutral camp. Those men who remained in the town formed

a Home Guard, and the women did their part in helping to nurse the wounded. At first, before they became accustomed to the shells, large bomb-proofs were built, cellars were dug, and holes of different degrees of depth and darkness were tunnelled in the banks of the river and in the gardens of the houses. Some of these were reserved for the women, and others for the men, and in them the unhappy inhabitants would sit as long as the firing continued, playing cards by the light of a candle, or reading or sleeping.

Life in Ladysmith was a little worse than being confined in a jail, for a jail has at least the advantage of being a comparatively safe and secluded habitation. The smoke of "Long Tom" on Bulwana, which was the gun of the greatest terror to the inhabitant, could be seen for twenty-five seconds before the shell struck in the town, and, in order to warn people of its coming, sentinels were constantly on watch to look for the smoke and give the alarm. At one hotel the signal was the ringing of a bell; the Indian coolies used an iron bar swung from a rope which they beat with another iron bar, and the different regiments enjoyed the ser-

"Tommies" Seeking Shelter from "Long Tom" at Ladysmith.

vices of their buglers. So that the instant a white puff of smoke and a hot flash of fire appeared on Bulwana, there would be a thrilling toot on the bugles, a chorus of gongs, bells, and tin pans, and the sound of many scampering footsteps. It was like a village of prairie dogs diving into their underground homes. But the familiarity soon bred indifference, and after a few weeks, only a small number of the people sought refuge under the iron roofs and sand-bags, but walked the streets as freely as though the shells weighing a hundred pounds were as innocent of harm as the dropping of the gentle dew from heaven.

Indeed, the shells were not the chief danger that walked abroad in the streets of Ladysmith; lack of food and exercise, bad water, and life underground soon bred fever, and its victims outnumbered those of Long Tom nearly ten to one. By this time the military authorities had complete control of all food, and distributed it impartially. They "commandeered" the hens, who, so it is said, refused to lay eggs as soon as they found they were worth six shillings a piece, and ordered all bread-stuffs to be sold at public auction. They seized cows and all

kinds of eatables, for which they paid a fair price and which were reserved for the good of all. The whole town, without distinction, was on fixed rations, which the people drew each day at appointed places. The women and children say that the thing they most missed was not the heavy food, but milk for their tea; the men, without one dissenting voice, tell me that the loss of tobacco was their greatest hardship. During our war with Spain, I suggested that our commissariat officers made a mistake before Santiago in classing tobacco with "luxuries" and "officers' supplies," and in not hurrying it to the front with the bacon and coffee, and I was severely criticised for this and asked if I wanted people to believe that our soldiers were so effeminate as to be unhappy without such luxuries as cigarettes and eau de cologne.

As an answer, it is interesting to read in the official list of the prices brought at auction in Ladysmith, that while a tin of milk sold for $2.50, a quarter of a tin of tobacco brought $15.

In time two thousand horses were killed and served out instead of beef; and starch, with bluing in it, originally intended for washing

clothes, and bran were made into a bread. Canary-seed was beaten up into meal, and the violet powder, which some women put on their fair faces, was made into the most delicate of rice-cakes. These deprivations, which seemed tragedies at the time, now form the humors of the siege. They are the facts which the besieged first tell you—they are the incidents to which they will always refer. They will never sit down to a good dinner when a stranger is present but that they will say, "This is a little better than corn-starch and horse-meat, isn't it?" They were saying it a day after the siege was raised—they will still be saying it to their grandchildren. These are the humors of the siege, because the siege has been lifted; the real tragedies of the siege are as real tragedies to-day as they were when the bodies of Colonel Dick-Cunyngham, Lieutenant Egerton of the Powerful, the Earl of Ava, and George W. Steevens were carried each under the Union Jack to the little cemetery by the Klip River. I speak only of these out of the many tragedies, because, perhaps, they were to the public who knew them by their deeds, as well as to the friends who loved them for themselves, the men

who will be missed the most and for the longest time. They were all young, able, and brave. Dick-Cunyngham gained the Victoria Cross in Afghanistan and survived his wound at Elandslaagte only to be killed at last while riding out at the head of the regiment, by a chance, spent bullet, fired by an unseen enemy, and while he himself was unseen by the hand that fired it. Egerton, whose navy guns saved the day at Lombards Kop, was struck by a shell that entered the embrasure of his own parapet and tore away both his legs. Yet so great was the courage of the young man that when his gunners raised him in their arms he looked down grimly and said, "They've done for my cricket, haven't they?" An hour later, so the officers tell me who were in the hospital when he was carried there, he was still cheerful, and smoking a cigar, and apologizing for the trouble he was giving to the jackies who carried him. An hour later he died.

Lord Ava had already seen war as a soldier in South Africa, though it is not at the mess-table of one regiment alone that he will be missed, but in widely separated parts of the world. He had been with his father in Canada,

The Earl of Ava.

India, and Europe, and he was as well known in New York and Ottawa as in London and Paris. His was a particularly gay, lovable, manly nature, and he was brave to the edge of recklessness, always volunteering for those actions in which his own regiment was not engaged. When he died of the wounds he received at the Battle of Cæsar's Camp, his body was followed to the grave by Tommies, officers, and civilians, each of whom mourned him as a personal friend. His father gave the city of Ava and all of Upper Burmah to the British Empire; his son gave his life. And in return the empire gives him six feet of earth by the muddy waters of the Klip River. It was a fine end, but it is hard to see the meaning of it.

The death of George W. Steevens was as hard and as difficult a problem. He had but only begun a career of brilliant and helpful work. It was work peculiarly his own. He borrowed no one's point of view, but by a marvellous instinct and intuition picked out in all he saw the essential, the dramatic, the human, and the humorous, and expressed it so that others saw it for themselves. His last

letter shows how the siege filled him with boredom and *ennui*. In one letter he says: "Come quickly to our relief or we die—not of shells, but of dulness." I do not know that I can make it clear, but it seems in some way to add to the pathos of his end that it should have come to the man who went to Khartoum with Kitchener, to Calcutta with Curzon, and to Rennes with Dreyfus—when he was longing to be up and doing, when all of those fine instincts and possibilities of perception and powers of expression were in rebellion at being kept idle, and were starving for the action, and incident, and color of which his hand was the master.

The Battle of Colenso could be heard across the hills beyond Ladysmith, and promised that relief was imminent. For was not Buller coming at last, and were not those his guns forcing back the Boers? Throughout the long hot day of December 3d the imprisoned people listened with awe and hope to the rolling thunder of the great cannon. They surely proclaimed the end. In a week, in a day Buller would be across the Tugela, the Boe

George W. Steevens.

would abandon Bulwana, at any moment might they not see Buller's cavalry galloping across the plain? The people climbed up to the top of Convent Hill for the first view of them. But instead came a story of dismay, the story of Buller's repulse, and then silence, weeks of silence, until it seemed as if the world was going on without thought of them, and they sank back like shipwrecked sailors who watch the parting sail disappearing below the horizon. But they were not in despair; at least, the garrison was not. It was too busy guarding the long line of defences to give way to any such weakness or to abuse its countrymen. Of course, the civilians were indignant, or some of them were. They whined about their lost property, they vowed if they ever got out that they would be jolly well paid for their lost property—they had no doubt but that the Boers had stolen all their chickens and desecrated their farm-houses, of one-storied brick with a tin roof, by turning them into hospitals for the wounded farmers. Someone must pay the colonial for such outrages, and for their chickens, too—the British Empire must not think she can turn one of her colonies into a

battle-ground and march her troops across it, unless she expects to pay for those chickens. They are unselfish, loyal people, the Natal colonials. But they are very independent, and for fear you may not notice it by their manner—they tell you so. "We colonials," they say; "we are independent." They are so independent that they charged the Tommies who had come seven thousand miles to fight for them, and who were protecting their dusty, corrugated-zinc town with their lives, a shilling each for slices of bread and molasses.

Ladysmith was not entirely cut off from the world; Kaffir boys would for $100 carry messages through to Chieveley, and the heliograph, after losing its way and tapping many Boer wires, and being most scandalously insulted by the Boer mirrors for doing so, finally established communication with Ladysmith and talked to it whenever the sun shone by day, and by night with locomotive head-lights and search-lights. The officer who finally called up Ladysmith, is young Captain Cayser, and the story of his efforts to communicate with the besieged garrison is a most creditable and curious one. For many days he trudged up one

high hill after another and flashed his mirror, but without response, except from the Boers in between. And they, when he thought he had "got" Ladysmith on the 'phone, would shock and undeceive him by some such pleasantry as "How do you like our pom-poms?" or "Go to Hell." Not discouraged, Captain Cayser continued to climb many hills, until at last the mirror of Ladysmith winked back at him. "Who are you?" Cayser asked. "I am Walker of the Devons," came back the answer. But Captain Cayser had grown suspicious, and in order to make quite sure who it was with whom he was talking, he flashed back, "Find Captain Brooks of the Gordons and ask him the name of Captain Cayser's country-place in Scotland." A hurried search was made for Brooks of the Gordons, and the answer came back: "We are acquainted with the name of your home in Perthshire." "Then use it for the code word," Cayser commanded, and for the remainder of the siege the name of Cayser's country home was used to send every cipher message that passed out of Ladysmith over the heads of the Boers. It is further related that when the signal officers found

Brooks of the Gordons and said, "Captain Cayser has just heliographed in to ask you to tell him the name of his country house," that officer remarked, "Well, I always thought Cayser was an ass, but I didn't think he'd forget the name of his own home." The picture of a gentleman heliographing violently into a besieged city to find out where he lived has certainly a humorous side.

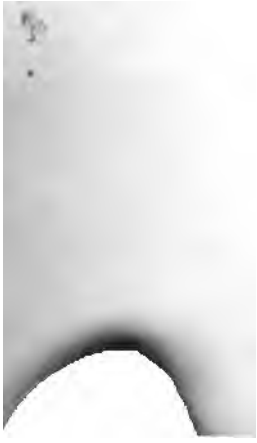
One of the most pitiful stories of the siege concerns not human beings but their fellow-sufferers, the horses. When it became evident that the garrison could no longer feed the hundreds of horses in the artillery and cavalry regiments, and that the corn must be saved for the men, a certain few of the horses were picked out to do scouting, others to be killed and eaten, and about three hundred were stampeded.

The horses had never been taught to eat grass, so after a happy morning's frolic they all came charging back at meal-time, neighing for their oats and water, and it became necessary to drive them out again and post sentries at the entrance of the streets to keep them out.

For a few days the town was filled with

Horses Being Conveyed into Town to be Made into Soup.

Taken the morning Ladysmith was relieved.



stampeded horses. On the second day a horse from one regiment came across his gun-mate, who had pulled the same piece of artillery with him five years before in India, and the two poor things came galloping proudly back into the lines of the old regiment and up to the very crew of their old gun. I hope the men had no such stern sense of duty as to make them turn their old comrades out again.

Two months and two weeks had passed since the siege was declared before General Buller raised the hopes of the Ladysmith garrison by again resuming his attack. This attack continued for six weeks, the last two weeks being days and nights of unceasing battle. There was hardly an hour during his advance that it was not announced in Ladysmith that General Buller was "coming in." When he was at Spion Kop and his guns seemed almost within range of the city, everyone was rejoicing that the end had come. The troops of the garrison fought with fresh courage, people accepted their biscuit and a half per day with a better grace, feeling that starvation was to last but a few hours longer. And from the hill-tops came the camp rumors of clouds of

dust raised by approaching cavalry, of British helmets seen upon the nearest ridges, of the rattle of Maxims coming from not more than three miles distant. Again and again the people flocked into the street or gathered on Convent Hill, and as often returned to their houses or tents disheartened and undeceived. The men of the garrison were becoming hopelessly weak. They could not march two miles, and *eight* of every *thirteen* soldiers had been or still were on the hospital-list. Had the Boers attacked again as they did on the famous 6th of January, when men lay for hours within forty feet of each other, each behind a rock and each waiting for the other to show even a foot or a finger, it is almost certain that the garrison would not have had the physical strength to resist, and Ladysmith would have fallen.

In the meanwhile Buller's men were fighting desperately. They had abandoned their tents and were living in the open, sleeping among the rocks and the high grass, on some days drenched for hours by heavy tropical showers, and sleeping all night in uniforms as wet as sea-weed. Buller fared no better than his men,

and slept under the stars, sick officers lay under bushes, and the staff carried on the work of the army under wagons through which the rain poured upon their books and papers. To the man who read of Buller's slow advance in the daily despatches, who measured the distance between Colenso and Ladysmith on the map and found them only twelve miles apart, the delay of the column seemed incomprehensible.

"Twelve miles," he exclaimed; "they've been six weeks going twelve miles. Why, our troops in the Civil War used to march forty miles in one day." It is useless, unless one has seen the country through which Buller was forced to pass, to attempt to understand the task which lay before him. A general in his report who emphasizes difficulties is classed with the workman who makes his bad tools an excuse for bad work, and the public at home grow impatient. And, in consequence, much that might have been said in explanation was left unreported, and the people in Ladysmith who blamed the column and those outside of Ladysmith who could not comprehend its tardy progress, would have been more tolerant could they have seen the mountains, hills, and ridges

which nature had placed at the disposal of the Boers. Bloch, the authority on modern war, believes that with the new weapons a force intrenched and on the defensive is to the attacking force in the proportion of eight men to one, so if this be correct, the Boers outnumbered the English in that proportion, and the 25,000 of the latter were opposed to a position equal to 200,000 men on an open plain. As a matter of fact, the English outnumbered the Boers on different days from five to one up to twenty to one. Their chief difficulty was in the country, and another great difficulty was the fact that General Buller was too slow in following up an advantage. After he had taken a position he would reinforce it so leisurely that he allowed the Boers ample time in which to fortify and enfilade him from another. Also, he had suffered so heavily at Colenso in casualties that he was sensitive of losing more men, and in order to save life, attacked with forces so insufficient in numbers that many men were sacrificed for that reason. This was notably the case at the fight at Railway Hill, when the Inniskillings and a few Dublins and Connaughts were sent to take a position by frontal attack and lost six

hundred; a few days later the same position was attacked on the flank with nine regiments, and as a result the Boers abandoned it, and although there were nearly eight thousand more men engaged, the loss was only two hundred. Buller's continuous battles demonstrated that a fortified position may be shelled for half a day without the enemy being driven so far from it that he cannot return in time to meet a charge of infantry. The time which elapses between that moment when the artillery ceases firing in order to allow the infantry to mount the crest, was always sufficiently long to allow the Boers to reoccupy the trenches.

Before the Battle of Pieter's Hill, the West Yorks asked the artillery to continue to play upon the crest they were to storm up to the very last moment. The artillery obliged them so enthusiastically that several of the West Yorks were wounded; but still, in spite of the terrific bombardment, many of the Boers were found in the trenches, and had to be taken by the bayonet.

CHAPTER III

THE RELIEF OF LADYSMITH

AFTER the defeat of the Boers at the battle of Pieter's Hill, on February 27th, or Majuba day, there were two things left for them to do. They could fall back across a great plain which stretched from Pieter's Hill to Bulwana Mountain, and there make their last stand against Buller and the Ladysmith relief column, or they could abandon the siege of Ladysmith and slip away after having held Buller at bay for three months.

Bulwana Mountain is shaped like a brick and set on the side, blocking the valley in which Ladysmith lies. The railroad track slips around one end of the brick, and the Dundee trail around the other. It was on this mountain that the Boers had placed their famous gun, Long Tom, with which they began the bombardment of Ladysmith, and with which up to the day before Ladysmith was re-

lieved, they had thrown 3,000 shells into that miserable town.

If the Boers on retreating from Pieter's Hill had fortified this mountain with the purpose of holding off Buller for a still longer time, they would have been under a fire from General White's artillery in the town behind them and from Buller's naval guns in front. Their position would not have been unlike that of Humpty Dumpty on the wall, so they wisely adopted the only alternative and slipped away. This was on Tuesday night, while the British were hurrying up artillery to hold the hills they had taken that afternoon.

By ten o'clock the following morning from the top of Pieter's Hill you could still see the Boers moving off along the Dundee road. It was an easy matter to follow them, for the dust hung above the trail in a yellow cloud, like mist over a swamp. There were two opinions as to whether they were halting at Bulwana or passing it, on their way to Laing's Neck. If they were going only to Bulwana there was the probability of two weeks' more fighting before they could be dislodged. If they had avoided Bulwana, the way to Ladysmith was open.

Lord Dundonald, who is in command of a brigade of irregular cavalry, was scouting to the left of Bulwana, far in advance of our forces. At sunset he arrived, without having encountered the Boers, at the base of Bulwana. He could either return and report the disappearance of the enemy or he could make a dash for it and enter Ladysmith. His orders were "to go, look, see," and avoid an action, and the fact that none of his brigade was in the triumphant procession which took place three days later has led many to think that in entering the besieged town without orders he offended the commanding General. In any event, it is a family row and of no interest to the outsider. The main fact is that he did make a dash for it, and just at sunset found himself with two hundred men only a mile from the "Doomed City." His force was composed of Natal Carbiniers and Imperial Light Horse. He halted them, and in order that honors might be even, formed them in sections with the half sections made up from each of the two organizations. All the officers were placed in front, and with a cheer they started to race across the plain.

The Balloon at Ladysmith.

The wig-waggers on Convent Hill had already seen them, and the townspeople and the garrison were rushing through the streets to meet them, cheering and shouting, and some of them weeping. Others, so officers tell me, who were in the different camps, looked down upon the figures galloping across the plain in the twilight, and continued making tea.

Just as they had reached the centre of the town, General Sir George White and his staff rode down from head-quarters and met the men whose coming meant for him life and peace and success. They were advancing at a walk, with the cheering people hanging to their stirrups, clutching at their hands and hanging to the bridles of their horses.

General White's first greeting was characteristically unselfish and loyal, and typical of the British officer. He gave no sign of his own incalculable relief, nor did he give to Cæsar the things which were Cæsar's. He did not cheer Dundonald, nor Buller, nor the column which had rescued him and his garrison from present starvation and probable imprisonment at Pretoria. He raised his helmet and cried, "We will give three cheers for the Queen!" And

then the General and the healthy ragged and sunburned troopers from the outside world, the starved, fever-ridden garrison and the starved, fever-ridden civilians stood with hats off and sang their national anthem.

The column outside had been fighting steadily for six weeks to get Dundonald or any one of its force into Ladysmith; for fourteen days it had been living in the open, fighting by night as well as by day, without halt or respite; the garrison inside had been for four months holding the enemy at bay with the point of the bayonet; it was famished for food, it was rotten with fever, and yet when the relief came and all turned out well, the first thought of everyone was for the Queen!

It may be credulous in them or old fashioned, but it is certainly very unselfish, and when you take their point of view it is certainly very fine.

After the Queen everyone else had his share of the cheering, and General White could not complain of the heartiness with which they greeted him. He tried to make a speech in reply, but it was a brief one. He spoke of how much they owed to General Buller and

his column, and he congratulated his own soldiers on the defence they had made.

"I am very sorry, men," he said, "that I had to cut down your rations. I—I promise you I won't do it again."

Then he stopped very suddenly and whirled his horse's head around and rode away. Judging from the number of times they told me of this, the fact that they had all but seen an English General give way to his feelings seemed to have impressed the civilian mind of Ladysmith more than the entrance of the relief force. The men having come in and demonstrated that the way was open, rode forth again, and the relief of Ladysmith had taken place. But it is not the people cheering in the dark streets, nor General White breaking down in his speech of welcome, which gives the note to the way the men of Ladysmith received their freedom. It is rather the fact that as the two hundred battle-stained and earth-stained troopers galloped forward, racing to be the first, and rising in their stirrups to cheer, the men in the hospital-camps said, "Well, they're come at last, have they?" and continued fussing over their fourth of a ration of tea. That gives the real

f how Ladysmith came into her inher-
ıd of how she received her rescuers.
annot expect an entombed miner to be
m(ıstrative over his relief as are the men
: ıe to his rescue. He has been living
(: ends of candles, and drinking the black
water in the crevices of the coal. He is starved,
choked with fire-dar , raised in body, living
with his mouth to some fissure for a whiff of
free air. The men co ıg to his release are
the picked men of the mine, vigorous, eager,
filled with the strength of their purpose, work-
ing in desperate half-hour shifts, hacking,
crushing, pulling down, cheered as they descend
by the crowd at the pit's mouth, cheered again
and cared for as they are drawn up in the
basket, exhausted and breathless. They are in-
spired by the fact that they are fighting and
racing with death, but the man lying impris-
oned under the timbers hears the blows of their
picks dully, he has ceased to feel or to care.
And at last, when the pick's point breaks
through the wall of his tomb, it is not the man
lying exhausted at the bottom of the shaft who
rejoices, but it is the men who have saved him
who shout and cheer.

THE RELIEF OF LADYSMITH

On the morning after Dundonald had ridden in and out of Ladysmith, two other correspondents and myself started to relieve it on our own account. We did not know the way to Ladysmith, and we did not then know whether or not the Boers still occupied Bulwana Mountain. But by following the railroad track, we were sure of a reliable guide, and we argued that the chances of the Boers having raised the siege were so good that it was worth risking their not having done so, and being taken prisoner.

We carried all the tobacco we could pack in our saddle-bags, and enough food for one day. My chief regret was that my government, with true republican simplicity, had given me a passport, typewritten on a modest sheet of notepaper and wofully lacking in impressive seals and coats-of-arms. I fancied it would look to Boer eyes like one I might have forged for myself in the writing-room of the hotel at Cape Town.

We had ridden up Pieter's Hill and scrambled down on its other side before we learned that Dundonald had raised the siege himself. We learned this from long trains of artillery

and regiments of infantry which already were moving forward over the great plain which lies between Pieter's and Bulwana. We learned it also from the silence of conscientious, dutiful correspondents, who came galloping back as we galloped forward, and who made wide detours at sight of us, or who, when we hailed them, lashed their ponies over the red rocks and pretended not to hear. They were unselfishly turning their backs on Ladysmith in order to send the first news to the paper of the fact that the "Doomed City" was relieved. This would enable one paper to say that it had the news "on the street" five minutes earlier than its hated rivals. We found that the rivalry of our respective papers bored us exceedingly. We condemned it as being childish and weak of them. London, New York, Chicago, were only names, they were places thousands of leagues away: Ladysmith was just across that mountain. If our horses held out at the pace, we would be—after Dundonald—the first men in. We imagined that we would see hysterical women and starving men. They would wring our hands, and say, "God bless you," and we would halt our steaming horses in the

Market-place, and distribute the news of the outside world, and tobacco. There would be shattered houses, roofless homes, deep pits in the roadways where the shells had burst and buried themselves. We would see the entombed miner at the moment of his deliverance, we would be among the first from the outer world to break the spell of his silence; the first to receive the brunt of the imprisoned people's gratitude and rejoicings.

Indeed, it was clearly our duty to the papers that employed us that we should not send them news, but that we should be the first to enter Ladysmith. We were surely the best judges of what was best to do. How like them to try to dictate to us from London and New York, when we were on the spot. It was absurd. We shouted this to each other as we raced in and out of the long confused column, lashing viciously with our whips. We stumbled around pieces of artillery, slid in between dripping water-carts, dodged the horns of weary oxen, scattered companies of straggling Tommies, and ducked under protruding tent-poles on the baggage-wagons, and at last came out together again in advance of the dusty column.

ides, we don't know where the press-
s, do we?" No, of course we had no
ere the press-censor was, and unless *he*
that Ladysmith was relieved, the fact that
25,000 other soldiers said so counted for idle
gossip. Our papers could not expect us to go
riding over mountains the day Ladysmith was
relieved, hunting for a press-censor. "That
press-censor," gasped Hartland, "never—is—
where he—ought to be." The words were
bumped out of him as he was shot up and
down in the saddle. That was it. It was the
press-censor's fault. Our consciences were
clear now. If our papers worried themselves
or us because they did not receive the great
news until everyone else knew of it, it was all
because of that press-censor. We smiled again
and spurred the horses forward. We abused
the press-censor roundly—we were extremely
indignant with him. It was so like him to go
off and lose himself on the day Ladysmith was
relieved. "Confound him," we muttered, and
grinned guiltily. We felt as we used to feel
when we were playing truant from school.

We were nearing Pieter's Station now, and
were half way to Ladysmith. But the van of

the army was still about us. Was it possible that it stretched already into the beleaguered city? Were we, after all, to be cheated of the first and freshest impressions? The tall lancers turned at the sound of the horses' hoofs and stared, infantry officers on foot smiled up at us sadly, they were dirty and dusty and sweating, they carried rifles and cross belts like the Tommies, and they knew that we outsiders who were not under orders would see the chosen city before them. Some of them shouted to us, but we only nodded and galloped on. We wanted to get rid of them all, but they were interminable. When we thought we had shaken them off, and that we were at last in advance, we would come upon a group of them resting on the same ground their shells had torn up during the battle the day before.

We passed Boer laagers marked by empty cans and broken saddles and black cold campfires. At Pieter's Station the blood was still fresh on the grass where two hours before some of the South African Light Horse had been wounded and their horses stampeded.

The Boers were still on Bulwana then? Perhaps, after all, we had better turn back and try

to find that press-censor. But we rode on and saw Pieter's Station, as we passed it, as an absurd relic of bygone days when bridges were intact and trains ran on schedule time. One door seen over the shoulder as we galloped past read, "Station Master's Office—Private," and in contempt of that stern injunction, which would make even the first-class passenger hesitate, one of our shells had knocked away the half of the door and made its privacy a mockery. We had only to follow the track now and we would arrive in time—unless the Boers were still on Bulwana. We had shaken off the army, and we were two miles in front of it, when six men came galloping toward us in an unfamiliar uniform. They passed us far to the right, regardless of the trail, and galloping through the high grass. We pulled up when we saw them, for they had green facings to their gray uniforms, and no one with Buller's column wore green facings.

We gave a yell in chorus. "Are you from Ladysmith?" we shouted. The men, before they answered, wheeled and cheered, and came toward us laughing jubilant. "We're the first men out," cried the officer, and we rode in

among them, shaking hands and offering our good wishes. "We're glad to see you," we said. "We're glad to see *you*," they said. It was not an original greeting, but it seemed sufficient to all of us. "Are the Boers on Bulwana?" we asked. "No, they've trekked up Dundee way. They took Long Tom down yesterday. You can go right in."

We parted at the word and started to go right in. We found the culverts along the railroad cut away and the bridges down, and that galloping ponies over the roadbed of a railroad is a difficult feat at the best, even when the road is in working order.

Some men, cleanly dressed and rather pale-looking, met us and said: "Good-morning." "Are you from Ladysmith?" we called. "No, we're from the neutral camp," they answered. We were the first men from outside they had seen in four months, and that was the extent of their interest or information. They had put on their best clothes, and were walking along the track to Colenso to catch a train south to Durban or to Maritzburg, to any place out of the neutral camp. They might have been somnambulists for all they saw of us, or of the

nches and the battle-field before them. found them of greatest interest, espe- ir clean clothes. Our column had not an linen in six weeks, and the sight of civilians in white duck and straw hats, ying walking-sticks, coming toward us r the railroad ties, made one think it was lay at home, a se were excursionists suburbs.

came under the shadow of Bulwana with in sense of awe at its mere name. Even though abandoned, it seemed to possess the terrors of a fortress, deserted, but still grim and menacing. Its base was an eruption of trenches, a ploughed field in which each furrow ran at a tangent. Below these trenches swept the Klip River, a swift khaki-colored stream, which at the base of Bulwana was thrown sharply from its course by hundreds of fat sacks of earth, packed tightly and built up solidly into a mammoth dam. Work on this dam had been given up at an instant's warning. Thousands of the empty sacks lay on the bank in carefully arranged heaps. Others, already half filled, were standing in rows along the track, and the spades which had been used to fill them still stuck up-

right in the earth. The place looked as though the noonday whistle had just sounded, and the workmen had betaken themselves and their dinner-pails to the shade of the nearest trees.

We had been riding through a roofless tunnel, with the mountain and the great dam on one side, and the high wall of the railway cutting on the other, but now just ahead of us lay the open country, and the exit of the tunnel barricaded by twisted rails and heaped-up ties and bags of earth. It was our last obstacle, for as we rode around it into the river-bushes we came out into the plain and left Bulwana behind us. For eight miles it had shut out the sight of our goal, but now, directly in front of us, was spread a great city of dirty tents and grass huts and Red Cross flags—the neutral camp—and beyond that, four miles away, shimmering and twinkling sleepily in the sun, the white walls and zinc roofs of Ladysmith.

We gave a gasp of recognition and galloped into and through the neutral camp. Natives of India in great turbans, Indian women in gay shawls and nose-rings, and black Kaffirs in discarded khaki, looked up at us dully from the earth floors of their huts, and when we shouted

"Which way?" and "Where is the bridge?" only stared, or pointed vaguely, still staring.

After all, we thought, they are poor creatures, incapable of emotion. Perhaps they do not know how glad we are that they have been rescued. They do not understand that we want to shake hands with everybody and offer our congratulations. Wait until we meet our own people, we said, they will understand! It was such a pleasant prospect that we whipped the unhappy ponies into greater bursts of speed, not because they needed it, but because we were too excited and impatient to sit motionless. For the last two hours they had known that something extraordinary was going forward, else why had they been led across open trellis-work bridges, and jumped down ravines, and kept at a gallop, while the rest of the army was crawling on at a walk? They, who at other times had to be beaten out of a walk, now scorned to trot; a gallop had become their natural gait.

In our haste we lost our way among innumerable little trees; we disagreed as to which one of the many cross-trails led home to the bridge. We slipped out of our stirrups to drag

the ponies over one steep place, and to haul them up another, and at last the right road lay before us, and a hundred yards ahead a short iron bridge and a Gordon Highlander waited to welcome us, to receive our first greetings and an assorted collection of cigarettes. Hartland was riding a thoroughbred polo pony and passed the gallant defender of Ladysmith without a kind look or word, but Blackwood and I galloped up more decorously, smiling at him with good-will. The soldier, who had not seen a friend from the outside world in four months, leaped in front of us and presented a heavy gun and a burnished bayonet.

"Halt, there," he cried. "Where's your pass?"

Of course it showed excellent discipline—we admired it immensely. We even overlooked the fact that he should think Boer spies would enter the town by way of the main bridge and at a gallop. We liked his vigilance, we admired his discipline, but in spite of that his reception chilled us. We had brought several things with us that we thought they might possibly want in Ladysmith, but we had entirely forgotten to bring a pass. Indeed I do

ve one of the twenty-five thousand had been fighting for six weeks to adysmith had supplied himself with e night before, when the Ladysmith ad tried to halt Dundonald's troopers me way, and demanded a pass from n, there was not one in the squadron.

crossed oberly and entered La smith at a w the ponies looked d concerted an . After the high grass and the mountai of red rock, where there was not even a tent to remind one of a roof-tree, the stone cottages and shop windows and chapels and well-ordered hedges of the main street of Ladysmith made it seem a wealthy and attractive suburb. When we entered, a Sabbath-like calm hung upon the town ; officers in the smartest khaki and glistening Stowassers observed us askance, little girls in white pinafores passed us with eyes cast down, a man on a bicycle looked up, and then, in terror lest we might speak to him, glued his eyes to the wheel and "scorched" rapidly. We trotted forward and halted at each street-crossing, looking to the right and left in the hope that someone might nod to us. From the opposite end of

Gordon Highlanders Waiting at Bridge to Receive General Buller.

the town General Buller and his staff came toward us slowly—the house-tops did not seem to sway—it was not "roses, roses all the way." The German army marching into Paris received as hearty a welcome. "Why didn't you people cheer General Buller when he came in?" we asked later. "Oh, was that General Buller?" they inquired. "We didn't recognize him." "But you knew he was a general officer, you knew he was the first of the relieving column?" "Ye-es, but we didn't know who he was."

I decided that the bare fact of the relief of Ladysmith was all I would be able to wire to my neglected paper, and with remorse started to find the Ladysmith censor. Two officers, with whom I ventured to break the hush that hung upon the town by asking my way, said they were going in the direction of the censor. We rode for some distance in guarded silence. Finally, one of them, with an inward struggle, brought himself to ask, "Are you from the outside?"

I was forced to admit that I was. I felt that I had taken an unwarrantable liberty in intruding on a besieged garrison. I wanted to say that I had lost my way and had ridden

into the town by mistake, and that I begged to be allowed to withdraw with apologies. The other officer woke up suddenly and handed me a printed list of the prices which had been paid during the siege for food and tobacco. He seemed to offer it as being in some way an official apology for his starved appearance. The price of cigars struck me as especially pathetic, and I commented on it. The first officer gazed mournfully at the blazing sunshine before him; "I have not smoked a cigar in two months," he said. My surging sympathy, and my terror at again offending the haughty garrison, combated so fiercely that it was only with a great effort that I produced a handful. "Will you have these?" The other officer started in his saddle so violently that I thought his horse had stumbled, but he also kept his eyes straight in front. "Thank you, I will take one if I may—just one," said the first officer. "Are you sure I am not robbing you?" They each took one, but they refused to put the rest of the cigars in their pockets. As the printed list stated that a dozen matches sold for $1.75, I handed them a box of matches. Then a beautiful thing happened.

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That first day in Ladysmith gave us a faint experience as to what the siege meant. The correspondents had disposed of all their tobacco, and within an hour saw starvation staring them in the face, and raced through the town to rob fellow-correspondents who had just arrived. The new-comers in their turn had soon distributed all they owned, and came tearing back to beg one of their own cigarettes. We tried to buy grass for our ponies, and were met with pitying contempt; we tried to buy food for ourselves, and were met with open scorn. I went to the only hotel which was open

in the place, and offered large sums for a cup of tea.

"Put up your money," said the Scotchman in charge, sharply. "What's the good of your money? Can your horse eat money? Can you eat money? Very well, then, put it away." The arrangements at this hotel were that each lodger drew his own rations from the military, and the hotel people cooked and served them. It was an interminable time before the food arrived, and on the second day my rations were four biscuits and an ounce of tea. The other lodgers proudly boasted of having lived on but one biscuit and a quarter a day, so the arrivals from the outside could not complain. On the third day some condensed milk arrived, and one man succeeded in obtaining a can of it. We watched it trickle out into his watery tea as though it were molten gold. A ration of "bully" beef, which was too tough to eat, was served to everyone, but sugar and soft bread were considered the greatest luxuries, and the most to be desired. The fortunate ones who got these used to convey them to the table in their hands and, when they had finished, carried away the

little brown paper cones which held the brown sugar, and the broken crusts of bread. In the lack of vegetables we drank the vinegar out of the cruets. On the fifth day they brought in some flour and served out the first soft bread the soldiers had eaten in three months. The biscuit which is given the English soldier as a substitute for bread does not compare with the hardtack served to our army. I found it exceedingly like dog-biscuit. On the fourth day a civilian appeared with a bottle of whiskey. He danced into the hotel with this, and all the other civilians who had lodged there during the siege charged upon him, and exhibited the first signs of enthusiasm they had shown. The man who had brought in the bottle was most generous, and gave us all a drink, but before he tasted his own he said, apologetically: "I am going to drink this to my mother. I promised my mother that if Ladysmith was relieved and we were all alive, I'd drink my first drink of whiskey to her. So you'll excuse me, please, gentlemen, if I don't drink this to the Queen." We were naturally shocked at his disloyalty, but as he had been so generous, some of us forgave him. A week later when the real food

[*Price List During the Siege*]

SIEGE

OF

LADYSMITH,

1899—1900.

I certify that the following are the correct and highest prices realised at my sales by Public Auction during the above Siege.

JOE DYSON,

Auctioneer.

LADYSMITH,
FEBRUARY 21*st*, 1900.

	£	s.	d.
14 lbs. Oatmeal	2	19	6
Condensed Milk, per tin	0	10	0
1 lb. Beef Fat	0	11	0
1 lb. Tin Coffee	0	17	0
2 lb. Tin Tongue	1	6	0
1 Sucking Pig	1	17	0
Eggs, per dozen	2	8	0
Fowls, each	0	18	6
4 Small Cucumbers	0	15	6
Green Mealies, each	0	3	8
Small plate Grapes	1	5	0
1 Small plate Apples	0	12	6
1 Plate Tomatoes	0	18	0
1 Vegetable Marrow	1	8	0
1 Plate Eschalots	0	11	0
1 Plate Potatoes	0	19	0
3 Small bunches Carrots	0	9	0
1 Glass Jelly	0	18	0
1 lb. Bottle Jam	1	11	0
1 lb. Tin Marmalade	1	1	0
1 dozen Matches	0	13	6
1 pkt. Cigarettes	1	5	0
50 Cigars	9	5	0
¼-lb. Cake "Fair Maid" Tobacco ...	2	5	0
½-lb. Cake "Fair Maid"	3	5	0
1 lb. Sailors Tobacco	2	3	0
¼-lb. tin "Capstan" Navy Cut Tobacco	3	0	0

when they had been given the chance, had refused to fill their pockets. I knew then that it was an effort worthy of the V. C.

The censor was at his post, and a few minutes later a signal officer on Convent Hill heliographed my cable to Bulwana, where, six hours after the Boers had abandoned it, Buller's own helios had begun to dance, and they speeded the cable on its long journey to the newspaper office on the Thames Embankment.

When one descended to the streets again—there are only two streets which run the full length of the town—and looked for signs of the siege, one found them not in the shattered houses, of which there seemed surprisingly few, but in the starved and fever-shaken look of the people.

The cloak of indifference which every Englishman wears, and his instinctive dislike to make much of his feelings, and, in this case, his pluck, at first concealed from us how terribly those who had been inside of Ladysmith had suffered, and how near to the breaking point they were. Their faces were the real index to what they had passed through.

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The town itself did not arouse one's sympathies. It straggles for a mile on either side of a wide dusty street. It consists of stone and corrugated-zinc shops of one story, a bare parade-ground, a court-house with a shattered bell-tower, and houses, also of one story and balanced by broad verandas, set back in gardens yellow with dust. It is an unlovely, unhomelike place, set when it rains in a swamp

of mud, and when the sun shines smothered in a plague of dust. The dust is so deep that a wind is not needed to raise a cloud, a team of oxen can do that, a column of marching men. When several teams of oxen are kicking up the dust at the same time, it is not safe to ride faster than a walk for fear of bumping into some unseen obstacle. For a whole morning at a time, when the wind sweeps down the street, Ladysmith's main avenue is a choking yellow fog, through which you can see but twenty feet about you. And when the dust is settled, all that you see is so practical, hard, and ugly, that one almost wishes for the curtain of dust to rise again and hide it. On one side of the main street the shops run so close together that it is possible to walk for over half a mile under the shelter of their iron awnings, and this was the promenade and meeting-place of the besieged people. Here the Tommies on leave from the camps walked and talked—here the Indian coolies sat crouched on their haunches—here the civilian colonials met to gossip and to abuse the relieving column and the British Parliament. For Tommy and the civilian, but for the excitement of the

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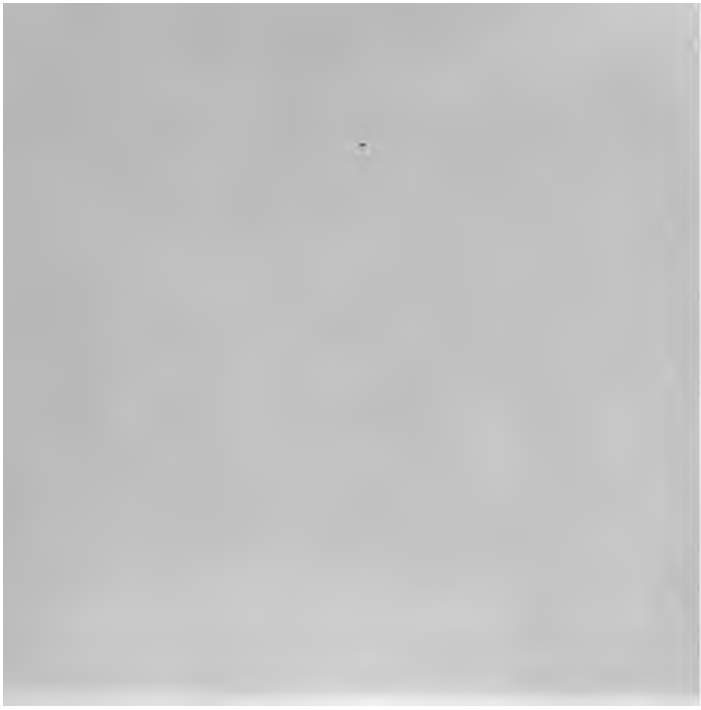

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That first day in Ladysmith gave us a faint experience as to what the siege meant. The correspondents had disposed of all their tobacco, and within an hour saw starvation staring them in the face, and raced through the town to rob fellow-correspondents who had just arrived. The new-comers in their turn had soon distributed all they owned, and came tearing back to beg one of their own cigarettes. We tried to buy grass for our ponies, and were met with pitying contempt; we tried to buy food for ourselves, and were met with open scorn. I went to the only hotel which was open

in the place, and offered large sums for a cup of tea.

"Put up your money," said the Scotchman in charge, sharply. "What's the good of your money? Can your horse eat money? Can you eat money? Very well, then, put it away." The arrangements at this hotel were that each lodger drew his own rations from the military, and the hotel people cooked and served them. It was an interminable time before the food arrived, and on the second day my rations were four biscuits and an ounce of tea. The other lodgers proudly boasted of having lived on but one biscuit and a quarter a day, so the arrivals from the outside could not complain. On the third day some condensed milk arrived, and one man succeeded in obtaining a can of it. We watched it trickle out into his watery tea as though it were molten gold. A ration of "bully" beef, which was too tough to eat, was served to everyone, but sugar and soft bread were considered the greatest luxuries, and the most to be desired. The fortunate ones who got these used to convey them to the table in their hands and, when they had finished, carried away the

little brown paper cones which held the brown sugar, and the broken crusts of bread. In the lack of vegetables we drank the vinegar out of the cruets. On the fifth day they brought in some flour and served out the first soft bread the soldiers had eaten in three months. The biscuit which is given the English soldier as a substitute for bread does not compare with the hardtack served to our army. I found it exceedingly like dog-biscuit. On the fourth day a civilian appeared with a bottle of whiskey. He danced into the hotel with this, and all the other civilians who had lodged there during the siege charged upon him, and exhibited the first signs of enthusiasm they had shown. The man who had brought in the bottle was most generous, and gave us all a drink, but before he tasted his own he said, apologetically: "I am going to drink this to my mother. I promised my mother that if Ladysmith was relieved and we were all alive, I'd drink my first drink of whiskey to her. So you'll excuse me, please, gentlemen, if I don't drink this to the Queen." We were naturally shocked at his disloyalty, but as he had been so generous, some of us forgave him. A week later when the real food

British Army. My only reason for leaving it was the one I have given—the fact that I found myself facing a month of idleness. Had General Buller continued his advance immediately after his relief of Ladysmith, I would have gone on with his column and would probably have never seen a Boer, except a Boer prisoner.

When the war opened, I felt that sympathy for the Boer which one generally holds for the under dog, and which one would think all Americans might feel for a people engaged in fighting for their independence; but in spite of this sympathy, and in spite of the wishes of the editors for whom I was acting as a correspondent, and who desired that I should follow the war from the Boer side, I elected to join the British.

I did this because I had never seen so large a body of troops in the field as there were British troops in South Africa, and it seemed a mistake to lose all that they could teach me of the most modern military organizations, equipment, and discipline — things in which the Boer Army was absolutely lacking. I was also moved to join the English Army because

almost every friend I had in England was with it fighting at the front.

After I had met the Boers and found them to be the most misrepresented and misunderstood people of this century, I sympathized with them entirely. And I believe that the people of England, who were betrayed into this war by Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Rhodes, who misrepresented facts, who suppressed the truth, who dangled before their eyes advantages they will never enjoy, and frightened them with evils which never threatened and which never will exist—I believe if those people could learn the truth, by three months of inquiry in the Transvaal, which was the way I learned it, their sympathies would be much as mine.

When once free of the martial law of Durban, I had supposed all would be as plain sailing before me as the trip made by the good ship König from that port to Delagoa Bay, but I had not sufficiently calculated on the Portuguese colony at Lorenzo Marquez. For this colony, as the "buffer" state between the British warships on the deep sea and the South African Republic, had erected such an intricate

and complex series of checks, counter-checks, and entanglements, that it was easier for a rich man to get into heaven than for a filibuster foreign mercenary, or soldier of fortune to cross over its neutral territory into the ranks of the Transvaal Army.

In order to reach Pretoria it was first necessary that I should take an oath before our consul, Mr. Stanley Hollis, that I did not intend to fight in the Boer Army, and to obtain a sealed and stamped document from him to that effect. On presenting this and my American passport at the office of the chief of police, I was given another sealed and stamped document stating that I had not, during the hour I had spent in Lorenzo Marquez searching for the American consul, committed any serious crime, and that, so far as the police were concerned, I was at liberty to depart. With these I next appeared before the military governor, and after again taking an oath that I did not intend to do anything which would strain the relations existing between Great Britain and Portugal, I obtained one more passport. With all of these I presented myself at the consulate of the Transvaal republic, where an alert young man gave

me a third passport and a permit over the Netherlands railway to Pretoria from Komatie Poort, which is the station where the Transvaal touches Portuguese territory.

On the day of my arrival at Lorenzo Marquez the town was invaded by the Irish-American ambulance corps from Chicago, and the Portuguese officials were much upset in consequence. The sixty members of the ambulance corps had been two months in reaching South Africa, and at every other port at which they had touched had been most generously treated, local port dues and taxes having been everywhere raised for their benefit.

But their Red Cross badges could not blindfold the Portuguese, who kept them to the letter of the law, refusing to pass the quinine and whiskey, which apparently formed the chief part of their medical supplies, and taxing them at the custom-house two shillings before they would pass the American flag. The ambulance corps expressed itself rather freely in consequence, and for the good of all, the American consul persuaded the Portuguese railway officials to speed the corps on its way in a special train before, as he significantly ex-

pressed it, in the phrase of Jameson raid memory, they "upset the apple-cart." We overtook them the next morning at Komatie Poort, where they were safely inside the Boer boundary, and were snapping their fingers at United States secret service officers, British consuls, and Portuguese governors.

Komatie Poort was a sunny, well-cared-for little town, with a clean, smart-looking station. It might have been competing for one of those prizes which the Pennsylvania Railroad gives to the stations on the line that are kept up to the highest standard of attractiveness. It only needed Komatie Poort spelled in geraniums, with a border of clam-shells, to be in the highly commended class.

It is hard to say exactly what we expected to find. Since I have reached the Transvaal I have been so busy taking in new ideas about the Boer and getting rid of most of the old ones, that the original picture I had of him has become dim and elusive. Yet mine was probably the impression of him which is still held by some millions of my fellow-countrymen.

A young man in a starched khaki uniform put his head in at the window of the railroad

carriage, and at sight of the ladies took off his hat. That was my first meeting with the "foul and unkempt" Boer. He wanted passports, and he asked in excellent English if I would come with him to the commandant. The commandant was an immense, jolly, busy man, in a suit of ready-made "store" clothes and a white helmet. He shook hands and bowed and laughed and brought me to a grave, long-bearded man, who looked like a well-to-do New Jersey farmer. The latter wrote his initials on my passport and gave some orders to the railway official in the red hat.

"That is all right now," said the commandant. "You need not open your luggage. It is all passed."

In the meantime a railway porter, having found that the Portuguese had reserved my compartment, hunted up a large blue and white sign with an inscription to the same effect, and fastened it to the door of the carriage. He also shook hands and bowed and smiled. Another official brought a bottle of most excellent French wine wrapped up in a newspaper, and suggested as it was going to be a warm

ride, that I had better accept this with his compliments.

The Chicago contingent were waving the American flag and cheering, and for the moment Americans were popular, but apart from all possible question of self-seeking, I have seldom met with greater good-natured kindness and politeness than I encountered on my first entrance into the Transvaal, a politeness and simple courtesy which have continued ever since.

We moved off between great stretches of light-green mountains that turned as they receded into a light blue and purple. There were but few trees. Dark willows and straight poplars told where a farm-house stood and fringed the water-ways, but the general landscape of bare hills and valleys was a light green, covered with the same cacti and mesquite bushes that one finds in Texas. The sun was a gorgeous blazing South African sun that pierced the clouds so fiercely that it robbed them of the shadow which in more temperate zones is found on the side nearer to the earth. They were, instead, masses of spotless white, without motion or apparent moist-

Three Generations of Boers Now Fighting.

ure, like vast cotton balls, of the dead white which one sees on the icing of a cake.

Ours was a leisurely but a triumphant progress. At trim little stations, set in flowers and surrounded by a dozen or more houses of red brick and the inevitable corrugated zinc, the station hands came out to cheer the American ambulance corps, and the naked Swazi boys who turned the switchboards grinned a welcome. As this welcome continued, the appearance of my fellow-passengers underwent a gradual and mysterious change.

Little Frenchmen in Tam o'Shanters and red sashes, who had been shy and inconspicuous in the presence of the Portuguese governor and his haughty clerks, now swaggered along the platform at each new stopping-place, in costumes which became by hourly additions more and more warlike. What apparently had been an abashed and obtuse German farmhand developed into an alert artilleryman, with a skull and cross-bones on each button of his uniform. A Russian count, who had passed as an attaché, appeared suddenly in the full skirts, boots, and silver cartridge-cases of a Cossack officer, and showed the wound he

had received in the Boer trenches. Coats of arms and ribbons of the Transvaal, which came apparently from nowhere, began to fasten themselves on the sombreros of my companions, and medals of foreign wars suddenly sprouted upon their breasts.

The Chicago ambulance corps laughed and winked. Already the men had found that the Red Cross bandage had become burdensome and bound them too tightly. It was stopping the circulation of the fighting-blood in their Irish veins. Two days later all but five of the bandages had been ripped off forever. I am only reporting what happened. If I were expressing opinions I would be forced to say that it is not becoming that the Red Cross flag should be used to cover a fighting man.

I like these particular men for themselves, and because they travelled many thousand miles to risk their lives for people fighting for their independence, but I do not like the garb in which they came. It gives our critics the right to say that the Irish-Americans tricked and deceived, and abused an emblem which is the protection of the helpless and the wounded. Even some of the Boers shake

their heads and say: "It is a pity they came so."

Toward midday we had our first sight of the Boer militant. He was a red-bearded farmer with a slouch hat, carrying a bandolier over his shoulder and a Mauser in his hand. He could not possibly appreciate the intense interest with which we regarded him. The ambulance corps surrounded him in an admiring, double circle. He was not exactly what they had expected to see. He was neither ferocious nor sullen, nor a wild man of the bush.

He was, instead, a simple, kindly eyed, uneducated farmer. He had been home on furlough to see his wife, and was going back again to the firing-line. He was going back without any pay, without any enticements or medals or rewards or pensions, without the assurance that in his absence an Absent Minded Beggar fund or a Mansion House purse would support his wife and children.

No one had offered him the freedom of any city; none of the American millionnaires who had dug their money out of the soil of his country had subscribed to give him a hospital ship; no pretty ladies poured out tea for

him at Sherry's under the patronage of Mrs. Langtry and Olga Nethersole; no kind friends presented him with a field-glass, nor "a housewife," nor a copy of "Bloc on War," or Baden Powell's "Aid to Scouting," nor a kodak camera, nor a bottle of meat tabloids, nor a sparklet squeezer, nor a Mappin & Webb's wrist watch, nor a patent water-filter, nor a knit night-cap, nor khaki pajamas, nor a pair of Stowassers. Fancy going to war without Stowassers and a bottle of tan dressing. This Boer soldier had his bandolier and his rifle, and at parting, the station-master, who had been in the same commando, shook hands with him and said: "Good-by, Piet." That was his "send-off," and it was likely to be his epitaph.

At the next station he was joined by three more farmers and the son of one of them, a boy sixteen years of age. The boy was not elated at the idea of being a soldier. He did not swagger nor tell of what he had already done to the British, which in a boy of his age might have been pardoned. Instead, he put his rifle in a corner and produced a melodeon, on which for many hours he continued to draw forth mournful and execrable sounds.

MY FIRST SIGHT OF THE BOER

There are many boys in the Boer Army. Four of them are sons of Reitz, the Secretary of State. His father told me proudly of how the youngest, who is fifteen years old, covered a British Tommy and called upon him to hold up his hands. As his comrades had already surrendered, the Tommy threw down his gun and said to the boy: "I don't care. I'm blooming well sick of this war, anyway. Ain't you?" "Oh, no," protested young Reitz, simply, "for father says that when the war is over he's going to send me back to school."

At every station along the line there were a few Boers gathered to cheer the ambulance corps. There were never more than three or four men to do the cheering, for every man who is not absolutely needed to direct a train or to work a telegraph button, is at the front, and all have been there once or twice already. But whenever the Irishmen appeared on the platforms and at the windows, there would be much handshaking and more cheering. An old Boer patriarch with white beard and gray, deep-set eyes, who might have posed for one of the Huguenot fathers, took off his hat at sight of the flag of our republic, and kept mut-

tering to himself, "Ach, daas is goed, daas is goed," until the train pulled out of the station. He thought it meant intervention; he thought that the flag floating from the car platform, and where, by the way, it had no business to be, meant that the American warships were already steaming into Delagoa Bay. He thought that because sixty wild Irish boys from "across the tracks" of Chicago had come ten thousand miles to help him fight for his liberty, the seventy millions of Americans they had left behind were coming, too.

To thirty thousand men — for I am convinced, after much careful inquiry, that that is all the Boers have had in the field at one time —sixty men count for something. But one could not help comparing the arrival of these sixty with the transports steaming into Table Bay, each with its thousands of men in khaki, so many thousands that no one in Cape Town ever turned to look at them—transports from Australia, transports from Canada, from India, from Scotland, Ireland, and England, and cattle ships, with horses, mules, and oxen, from Sydney, from Buenos Ayres, from Madrid and Cadiz, from New Orleans and Bombay.

MY FIRST SIGHT OF THE BOER

One hundred and eighty thousand picked men, "from all the world," "going to Table Bay" to fight thirty thousand farmers, clerks, attorneys, shopkeepers, and school-boys, for the gold that lies in the Rand—gold which has made the Boer neither happy nor rich. For have you ever heard of a Boer who has dug his fortune out of the gold mines? Do you know one Boer who owns a steam yacht or who has built a house in Park Lane?

The Boer owns the soil from which the gold comes, but the Uitlander owns the gold. What money the Boer has taken out of the mines by means of taxes, concessions, the dynamite monopoly, and the liquor law, has not gone into his pockets, but into weapons of war; has not been spent in another country, but in defending his own. When gold was first discovered here, the republic was on the verge of bankruptcy, and a Boer burgher rushed to the President in great delight to acquaint him with the news and to assure him that now that gold was found, the credit of the country was secured.

"Gold!" growled Kruger. "Do you know what gold is? For every ounce of that gold you will pay with tears of blood. Go to your

farm and read the Book. It will tell you what gold is."

We halted at night at Waterval Onder, and the next morning were dragged slowly up a steep incline over the mountains. It was easy to understand why the Boer loves his country. The mountains of red rock and light green grass followed each other in magnificent confusion as far as one could see. The river poured down between them for many miles, leaping from one height to the next in a succession of low, wide-spreading water-falls. Great, clean bowlders as high as a four-story house blocked the water-ways and formed deep silent pools, overhung by drooping trees and tangled creepers. The sun shone brilliantly on the white breakers of the water-falls, on the green mountain slopes, and on those bare spaces where the hematite had streaked the sides of rock a gorgeous red and yellow. There was little sign of habitation in the landscape, but it held a look of home. It was not barren or forbidding, but big and open, and full of color and beauty and sunshine.

Farther on toward midday the aspect of the country changed and we came to the broad,

windy velt, and the sprawling kopjes covered with rolling stones, the same manner of country I had already seen with Buller's column at Colenso. The veldt stretched for many level miles, without a rise or break except those made by the little stone farm-houses of one story and the surrounding circle of great poplars and the great kopjes. They were the same sort of kopjes which had held back the English at the Tugela, the same naturally fortified hills, the skyline of which we had so often scanned to catch even a brief glimpse of a Boer. It gave me quite a shock to see the kopjes again, and then to turn and find the Boer, with his bandolier and rifle, smoking peaceably in the seat beside me.

There was a large crowd at Middelburg, and, as it was Good Friday, everyone had been to church and was in his or her best bravery. The people cheered the Chicago boys, and Captain O'Connor brought out the flag and waved it over them.

The Landdrost made a speech, an eager and earnest speech, full of fight and courage, and the Americans cheered him and the South African Republic. Many more Boers boarded

the train here, and while the speechmaking was going forward entered the carriages and sat at the windows saying farewell to the women and children who had come in with them from the farms, and leaning out to hold their hands. The Boer women wore deep black alpaca frocks and black sunbonnets, and under the cover of these were weeping. They made a contrast to the white starched dresses and bright colors of the other women and little girls of Middelburg who were giving flowers and the Transvaal ribbon to the American volunteers. The men from "across two seas" received the simple welcome modestly and becomingly.

I have travelled with many soldiers on trains and transports and on the march, with our own regulars, with "Tommies," volunteers and soldiers of foreign lands, but I never saw men behave better than did the Chicago contingent. The temptations which beset them on the wayside were many. They had been six weeks at sea, and that, apart from the fact that they were going "to the front" through a friendly country, with refreshment-bars at every station, was sufficient excuse for over-rejoicing. But, on the contrary, the men conducted themselves as

well as the best disciplined troops in the world, and were then, as they were later in Pretoria, well-behaved and self-respecting. There was no band to play for them at Middelburg, so just before the train moved on, the Landdrost gathered the Boers and the women and girls together and sang a hymn to them.

The women's voices were thin and inadequate, and the big, broad-chested, heavily bearded men disregarded the tune scandalously, but the spirit of the act was true. The words were in Dutch, but the refrain was: "God keep you well." That much we could understand. It was all they had to offer. A brass band would have meant nothing but noise, but the tribute of good wishes from the women and little girls and old men touched the American boys deeply.

They stood in close order, with their campaign hats off and heads bent. Beyond them were the group of women in black, who were bidding good-by to their sons and praying for their return from the front.

And that was what the Boer women and little girls were doing as well in a foreign language for the Americans, because they had

come to fight for them, because they were going straight to the front, perhaps to die for them, because their own women folks were far away, some ten thousand miles away, and were not able to wish them godspeed.

And so it happened that on Good Friday last the Boer women of the Transvaal were praying for the sons of the women of the city of Chicago, of Cook County, in the State of Illinois.

CHAPTER V

PRETORIA IN WAR-TIME

IF Pretoria is awaiting her doom, she is awaiting it calmly. If the republic is at war, she does not allow that fact to disturb the peaceful repose of her capital. She gives so few signs here that her burghers are holding back the troops of the greatest empire on the globe that a stranger might dwell in Pretoria for a month and see nothing in her streets to make him suspect that he was in the capital of a government at war for its independence.

It has always been the aim of President Kruger and his counsellors to preserve in Pretoria the patriarchal idea upon which the republic is founded. Johannesburg was abjured by them as a modern city, the Uitlanders' city, the city where the streets were lined with gold, the city of vast, intricate machinery, of vaster and more intricate speculations; where men in one night lost the value of twenty thousand

head of oxen on a hand at poker, where one American mining engineer received a salary four times as great as that of the President of the United States, where in five years a former circus clown made one hundred million dollars. In their eyes it was a wanton city, and to offset its modern, foreign air, the life and customs of Pretoria were ordered in keeping with the simplicity, conservatism, and outdoor life of the Boer.

The President of the republic lives in what we could call a whitewashed cottage. The church in which he preaches to his people faces him from across the street. His official residence might be that of its pastor. On the porch of this cottage, with a cup of coffee at his elbow and a long pipe between his lips, he discusses and transacts the affairs of state. The children from the school-house on the corner come to visit him at recess and hang over his fence, and, unawed by the two helmeted policemen and the two marble lions, they talk to the President and he talks to them.

In the public square of the capital, where the Palace of Justice and the Government Building face each other, there is also, side by

President Krüger's Cottage.

side with office buildings, banks, and hotels that would be the pride of any of our smaller cities, a thatched cottage. And in the square itself, under the windows of the new building which cost three millions of dollars, the Boer farmers and cattle-dealers cook their meals over an open fire, their oxen "outspanned" beside the cabs, their women and children seated on the feather-beds inside the great canvas-covered carts. It is the idea of the President that every burgher, no matter from how far he may have driven his oxen, may feel that when he reaches this capital he, as a part of the State, is at home and welcome.

Pretoria reposes drowsily at the bottom of a basin, a great bowl made of hills. There is a crack in the bowl, and it is through this crack that the British Army, when it comes, will enter the capital. In the meantime Pretoria, shut in from the outside world not only by her circle of hills but by censors, armies, and a blockade of warships, waits tranquilly. For none of these, even while it increases her isolation, can disturb her calm. A session of the Volksraad, when it meets here may arouse her, because that is of interest to every man

over sixteen years of age in the republic; but the fact that one hundred and fifty thousand British soldiers are advancing upon her, limping, it is true, but still advancing, is a circumstance too foreign to her experience to ruffle her composure.

From any elevation Pretoria is a beautiful place, a great park of tall, dark-green poplars, with red roofs shining through, and the towers of the public buildings and the gilded figure of Liberty rising over all. From a distance Pretoria has almost the look of Florence. The hills about her are so high that the white, sunlit clouds are near enough when they pass to write their names upon them; and they continue for so great a distance that they turn, as they draw away, from a light green to a purple, and then to a misty, turquoise blue.

Pretoria down in the basin itself is not so beautiful. It is throughout half suburb and half city, with corrugated-zinc cottages next to a bank building, and a State museum adjoining the meat-market, but with trees and flowers and running water everywhere. The houses are of one story, each of them set in gardens of rose bushes and many of the older ones

roofed with thatch ; but the government buildings, the shops, the banks, and business houses are metropolitan. They suggest a new city of our West, and some of them, the banking-houses around the city square, are of the best style of architecture as it is adapted to homes of business. But the red dust, the chief characteristic of South Africa, and the ox-cart, the moving home of the Boer, destroy the illusion of a city.

The trek-wagons are as incongruous as are the costers' donkey-carts in Piccadilly. They are the most picturesque relics which remain to us from the days of the emigrant and of the pioneer. The caravan of camels still obtains, but it belongs to a people who have never left anything behind them, who have never progressed one stride in advance of the camel, and to whom the caravan with its rolled up tents and bales of merchandise is still part of their daily life. But the trek-wagon exists in a land of railroads and telegraphs, and rubs wheels with victorias and tram-cars. It is much like the great hooded carts which the empire makers of our West drove across the prairie, the real "ships of the desert," that carried civilization

with them, and that blazoned forth on their canvas as the supreme effort of the pioneer, "Pike's Peak or Bust." The ox-cart is the most typical possession of the Boer, and it and the lion, and the man with the rifle inh is hand, are the three emblems of the national coat-of-arms.

The cart is drawn by from five to ten pair of oxen led by a small Kaffir, the "voortrekker," and belabored from behind by another Kaffir, with a whip as far reaching as a salmon line. In the front seat sits the head of the family and behind him are his women folk in a mysterious zenana, from which they emerge clad in white starched linen, showing that the cart must contain, besides its bunks and mattresses, as many ingenious wardrobe-boxes and cubby-holes as the cabin of a ship. At the back of the long wagon sit the Kaffir women and their naked, beaded children. The rifle hangs ready at hand beside the box-seat ; water-kegs, pots, and pans swing between the wheels, and tools and fodder-boxes hang from either side.

The calm of the Pretoria streets is the calm of the people. In travelling from Ladysmith to Pretoria I have found nothing to be i

Public Square in Pretoria before the British Occupation.

greater contrast than the composed acceptance of the war by the Boer and the Englishman's complete absorption in it. In London, Cape Town, in Durban, in Ladysmith, on the steamers, in the field, the Englishman reads, talks, thinks of nothing else. Here the chief men of the Government find time to meet at a club twice a day to smoke and talk on almost any other subject. Yet each of them has been to the front for a month at a time, or for three months together, and each of them is going back again, but he speaks of his having been there without boasting or excitement, much as though he were a neutral who had run down to the battle-field to take photographs and collect exploded shells as souvenirs. I have heard one of them secure the entire attention of every man in the club by recounting his adventures on a hunting-trip which he had taken during his leave of absence from his commando, and his friends were much more keen to know how his pointers and setters had behaved than what his men had done in the firing-line. I commented on this, and one of them told me that during a reconnaissance which the British made from Ladysmith and

when the burghers were firing upon them, a couple of deer ran from the hills back of the Boer position. Instantly almost every burgher whirled about, and turning his back to the enemy, opened a fusillade on the deer.

To a great power such as is Great Britain, this war should be only an incident. But, strangely enough, it is the Boer who appears to consider it an incident, an unfortunate occurrence requiring severity upon his part and entailing the punishment of a wayward and mistaken enemy. He discusses the war tolerantly and patiently. He expresses a great pity that such fine fellows as the English soldiers should have come out so far to be killed. He can grow excited, but that is only momentary; his accustomed attitude toward the war is one of subdued interest.

What makes the remarkable resistance which the Boer has shown to the British forces the more remarkable, is this fact of his leisurely indifference to it all. He goes from the farm to the firing-line and back again to the farm almost at will, and what is even more surprising is the fact that when he is in the field he apparently only takes part in an engage-

ment when he feels inclined to do so. It is a usual thing for a hundred of them to lie in a trench protecting the position, and opposed sometimes to a thousand men, while the remaining three or four hundred of their comrades, who do not wish to fight, will be seated a hundred yards down the kopje smoking and eating. At Sand River, within three hundred yards of the artillery which was firing desperately on Lord Roberts's advancing column, I saw a thousand Boers, and not one of them was apparently conscious that a battle was going forward or that his services were badly needed. They sat among the rocks and talked together, or slept in the shade of a mesquite bush, or mounted their ponies and rode away. It is almost impossible to believe how few men are needed to hold one of these defensive positions, and I am convinced that throughout the war one man to ten has been the average proportion of Boer to Briton, and that frequently the British have been repulsed when their force outnumbered that of the Boers twenty to one. What terrible losses the burghers would have caused had they occupied the trenches in force is something the nations

which next meditate going to war with modern magazine rifles should weigh deeply. The Boers tell you casually when leading up to some other point, that at such and such a fight they placed ten men on one kopje and on another twenty. At Spion Kop the attack on the hill was made by forty men, so few indeed, so they claim, that one of the English colonels surrendered, and then on seeing, when the Boers left cover, to what a small force he was opposed, threw down the white flag and cried, "No, we'll not surrender," and fired on the Boers who were coming up to receive his rifles. One can imagine what an outcry such an incident as this would have called forth from the English papers had it been the Boer who first raised the white flag and then thought better of it. But the comment the Boer made on this "treachery" was, "It was probably a mistake. Perhaps someone without authority raised the white flag and the colonel did not know that. He wounded seventeen of our men, but I believe it was a mistake."

A number of Pretorians were at Nicholson's Nek, and they tell me that at that place their men were so few in proportion to the eleven

General Erasmus. Reitz, Secretary of State. Schalk Burger. General Kock.

General Joubert. Kruger. General Cronje.

The Executive Council.

hundred British soldiers who surrendered, that when the burghers sent a detachment from the trenches to take the Englishmen's arms, their own men were entirely swallowed up in the crowd, and they lost sight of them altogether. Every burgher, which means every man over sixteen years of age who can carry a rifle, is allowed twelve days' leave of absence out of each three months. If he overstays his leave, which the women, who are even more keen than the men, seldom permit him to do, he is brought back to his regiment or "commando" under arrest. But for this there appears to be very little punishment. What there is consists of fines, which the burghers cannot pay and which are remitted indefinitely until "after the war," and of enforcing pack drill, and police work around the camp. It is almost always the same men who force the fighting; that is, the same forty men out of a commando of three hundred will always volunteer to fight in the trenches, while the remainder help them from time to time exactly as they see fit. Knowing this, the wonder grows as to what would have happened to the British forces if the Boer had been a relentless foe with a taste

for blood-letting and slaughter, instead of one quite satisfied to hold his position with the least possible exertion, and with the least danger to himself. The accounts of his successful marksmanship are undoubtedly correct. It is owing to this and to his ability to judge distances in this peculiarly deceptive atmosphere that his fire, coming though it does from so few rifles, is so fatally effective. Eighty per cent. of the men in each commando are what we should consider sharp-shooters; and as opposed to them the Boers tell me that after a charge they have often picked up the English rifles where the soldiers have fallen a hundred yards from the Boer trench, and found that the sights on the Lee-Metfords were adjusted for eight hundred to eleven hundred yards. Of course, with sights at that range, no sharp-shooter, certainly no Tommy, could hit a Boer at a hundred yards, even if the burgher stood up and made a target of himself.

But it is the conduct of the Boer in Pretoria rather than his bearing in the field which is of the greater and more curious interest. For, as I have written, in Pretoria he gives us no sign that war exists.

His shop-windows are filled with something better than relics from battle-fields, portraits of his generals, or caricatures of his enemy, and he advertises nothing as being "absolutely essential to all officers going to the front." I know of only two shop-windows in Pretoria where anything is exhibited which would suggest that the country is at war. One of them is a row of bullets and spent shells, and the other is a collection of camp mattresses. They are not marked as being essential to anyone going to the front, or elsewhere. You can take them or leave them. Compare this modest recognition of the fact that a war is going forward, with what you find in Cape Town, Durban, and even in London. There at once you come upon hysterical patriotism and an unpleasant idea that everybody is trying to make money out of the patriotism of everyone else.

There is hardly a shop-window in any of these cities that is not dressed to catch the eye of the man "going south." In three different shops in Piccadilly he is offered three different kinds of hats as the "only authorized hat issued to the Yeomanry." And yet they cannot all be the authorized hat. Somebody must be

trying to make an honest penny. If he does not want an authorized hat he is allured by thousands of styles of watch-charms, ribbons, and sleeve-links decorated with the Union Jack, the Lion and the Unicorn, a portrait of the Queen, of Chamberlain, of Milner, of Rhodes. He is tempted by khaki overcoats, khaki underclothes, khaki blankets, khaki neckties, khaki night-shirts, although almost all colors look the same at night; patent stoves, patent medicines, patent picket-pins, patent gaiters, waterproofs, water-bottles, water-filters, compressed beef tablets, stomach-bands, compasses, cakes of chocolate, campaign pocket-knives, campaign folding beds, folding tables, folding camp-stools, folding maps, portraits of Buller, of Baden-Powell, of Roberts, of Kitchener, plaster statuettes of "the gentleman in khaki," the same gentleman reproduced on letter-paper, on fans, on pocket-handkerchiefs, postal-cards with Caton Woodville's war-pictures in one corner, boxes of cigarettes bristling with photographs of the war-heroes, hat-bands and banners bearing the name of Ladysmith, Kimberley, Mafeking.

Every war is the shopman's opportunity, and

he can be excused. But the calmness and fairness with which the Boer regards the war and his enemy, in comparison with the hysteria of the Englishman on the same subject, are novel and unexpected developments. Englishmen are generally calm, sane, and cool-headed, and to the Englishman war is no new thing.

"Oh, we always have some little war on somewhere," Englishmen say. You have only to pass Sanford's shop in Cockspur Street to prove how true this is. In the window there is never less than one map displayed, with little flags stuck over it, showing the position of the English forces at war in India, in the Soudan, or along the west coast of Africa.

And this also is only a little war. The South African Republic is about the littlest nation on the map. One would think that if Great Britain meant to wipe it off the slate she would have done so quickly, or when she found that this was difficult, she would not call the attention of the world to the fact that she was in trouble, but would cover it up, make light of it, and would try to throw us off the scent by starting a world's fair, or manœuvring her squadron; that she would do anything before

she would allow the Powers to see that her entire empire is upset by thirty thousand farmers, and that for six months they have held her and her colonies at bay.

Even if the people of England have lost control of themselves and of their sense of perspective, her statesmen might be expected to keep their heads, and to remember that South Africa is only a part of the British Empire, and that this is only one of England's little wars. But apparently no one has any other thought than of South Africa. They have sent out the regular army, the reserves, the militia, the volunteers, three dukes, the Honorable Artillery company, the post-office clerks, the barristers from the Temple, the cashiers from the bank, the yeomen from the farms, the "special corps" of "gentlemen," the crofters and gillies from Scotland, the caddies from the golf links, the Canadian rough riders, the Australian mounted police, the New Zealand Light Horse, the Bengal lancers, the Indian coolies.

And to emphasize the fact that they have been forced to do this, they are going to give the loyal colonials, the same colonials that they

snubbed so quickly when they first offered their services before the war began, a triumphal march through the streets of London, instead of sending them home quickly and secretly so that no one would know that they had had to call upon them for help.

They have sent the good Queen to Ireland for the first time in half a century, electioneering, and have bribed the Irish with the privilege, which they should always have enjoyed, of standing guard at St. James's Palace. They have robbed the ships-of-war of men and of guns, they have coquetted with poverty-stricken Portugal, they have sent all the way to Klondike to get an American to act as their chief of scouts, and they have finally sent their two great generals to the front, only to find that they have but one great general, and that the other, upon whom they had lavishly bestowed a fortune and a title, is not a tactician nor a fighting man, but an intelligent train-despatcher and chief of commissariat.

One would think that some sane man in the nominal opposition party would point out to the Government that this war is a good subject to drop, to lay on the table, that it is not one

to discuss to crowded galleries, that it is only showing to the amused Powers of Europe weakness after weakness. We have all for so long believed England to be a great military Power that at first we excused defeat after defeat. We even cabled them home as "reverses."

But to-day no real friend of England would try to hide the fact that she is in a precarious and ridiculous predicament, and that she is going about saving the remnants of her lost prestige in the wrong way. A friend of England, which I certainly claim to be, would beg her to call upon her sense of humor, to get back her sense of proportion, to act as though this war was not so very serious—as though it were an incident. Let us advise her to stop her Absent-Minded Beggar funds and all the other undignified appeals to private purses for that which should come out of the national exchequer. It is not becoming that every actress who wants an advertisement and every colonial millionnaire who wants a knighthood should be permitted to pass the hat for the British Tommy. The rattle of the tambourine is being heard much too distinctly. It is lack-

ing in dignity, it is "not done." It is not what we have learned in the past to expect from our English cousins.

We have a small war of our own on our hands at present. We have an army of 60,000 men locked up in the Philippines, having taken all of its chief cities, from none of which it dares move at night for fear of being captured. In our newspapers we give our war a short quarter of a column of space a day, partly because we are rightly ashamed of it and partly because we are too busy over other things to treat it except as an incident.

The Boer treats his war as an incident. He is not hysterical. He does not repeat every old woman's tale of poisoned wells and poisoned bullets, of treacherous white flags, or talk of hanging rebels, nor accuse the enemy of cruelty, brutality, and firing on Red Cross flags. When a man is in the wrong he invariably blusters and makes wild accusations to cover up the fact that he is ashamed of himself and of what he is doing.

If a man has your watch you merely go to the nearest policeman and say: "That man has my watch." But if you are planning to

take his watch you first blacken his character and rake up all his past history to prove that he is a despicable ruffian. You say: "He is a foul, unkempt person, and I mean to take his gold watch." "He does not wash, and I mean to take his gold watch." "He sings hymns on the battle-field and quotes the Bible correctly, which proves he is a hypocrite, so I mean to take his gold watch." "He refuses to allow me full burgher rights and to sing 'God Save the Queen' at the same time, and so I mean to take his gold mines."

It must be because the English are so conscious of the injustice of this war that they rail as they do at the Boer. The Boer, with his independence threatened, might be excused if he railed at the men who are trying to rob him, but he does not. He is only somewhat hurt and a good deal dazed at the charges they make against him, but he is still good-humored, calm, and determined.

For the last four months I have sat in tents, on steamer-decks, and on the terrace of the Mount Nelson Hotel and listened to old friends from London talk on this war with a spirit of intolerance, unfairness, and credulity which

made me doubt if they could possibly be the same sportsmanlike, healthy-minded, well-balanced men that I had formerly known. Never in its most unlicensed moments did the yellow press of America concoct such absurd stories, as clean-limbed, clean-minded English officers will believe and retell against the Boer, their enemy, whom few of them, except those who have surrendered, have ever seen.

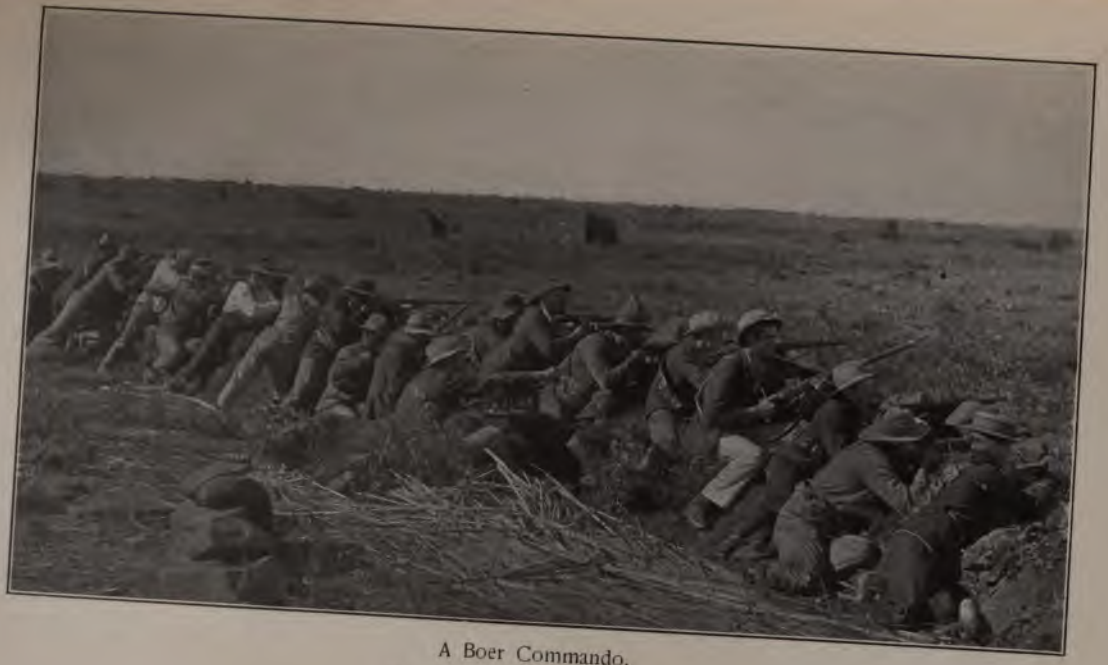
Compare their attitude of mind toward the Boer with the attitude of the Boer toward them—the Boer who has had to suffer many things, who has every excuse to censure, who has much to forgive.

The wife of one of the chief men in the republic told me of a call she made on Mrs. Kruger three days after the battle of Spion Kop. I will report what happened exactly in her words. She found the wife of the President red-eyed with weeping and in a state of complete dejection. "The President," explained Mrs. Kruger, "has just received a telegram from General Botha. He says the English have not buried their dead yet at Spion Kop. It is three days now and they are still lying there. I cannot understand why it is so.

Even the birds respect a dead body so much that they will not touch it for three days; then tell me why is it that these English have no respect for their own dead. I cry when I think of the mothers and children of these poor men. You will excuse me, but I have been so miserable I have not changed my dress. I cannot sleep to-night if I think those men are lying there yet."

You remember the Queen's message, beginning, "My heart bleeds," and so on, "for my soldiers." Mrs. Kruger's heart bled, too, for the Queen's soldiers, the men who had been sent to rob her of her home and country. Compare the two, the good Queen sent to Ireland, after neglecting it for fifty years, to encourage enlistment, and the wife of the Boer President, weeping over the soldiers who had tried to kill her countrymen. Which shows the greater unselfishness, the more Christian spirit, the nobler charity?

The sequel I hardly care to write. But in as brief words as possible be it told that General Botha wrote to Buller requesting permission to bury the English dead and asking for a guarantee that his men would not be fired on



A Boer Commando.

The boy third in the line is young Botha.

while thus engaged. Buller replied that he would guarantee protection to the Boers while they were burying the English, and requested that they should "send him in a bill for their trouble."

This reply of Buller's and the charge of the Fifth Lancers at Elandslaagte are the only two incidents of the war which a Boer cannot discuss with tolerance. Save for these two incidents I cannot find that they have any hard feelings toward the English except those, of course, which are aroused by the fact of his trying to rob the Boer of his liberty. But these two incidents have hurt deeply.

The charge of the Fifth Lancers was described by an officer of the regiment in a letter home as "good pig-sticking," and consisted, so the Boers say, of the lancers stabbing the wounded Germans and Dutch volunteers as they lay on the ground waiting for the ambulances, and as they raised their hands for mercy. One Swiss hotel-waiter was brought in here from Elandslaagte with a bullet wound in the knee which had brought him to the ground and seventeen lance wounds in his body which he had received from apparently each Tommy

who rode over him. But so far as I can learn, what hurt the Boers more than the stabbing of the wounded men on the ground is that one unfortunate line of the English officer who described the charge as good "pig-sticking."

It is the ill-breeding and useless callousness and brutality of that remark which the Boer cannot understand. The officer, let us hope, has been crowded out of the regiment, but his phrase was, with rare lack of taste, copied widely into all of the English newspapers. The fact that this was done shows in itself how since the war the taste and judgment of so many people in England have fallen below the old standard and have become hardened and distorted.

We see it also in the fact that in one of his letters Mr. Kipling speaks jauntily of "a good killing," and Winston Churchill even, than whom there is no one among English correspondents for whom I entertain a higher regard, writes, "we had a good 'bag' to-day—ten killed, seventeen wounded." It is not becoming that a great genius like Rudyard Kipling should not see something more in the killing of a few poor farmers than a day's pig-killing in

the Chicago stockyards, and that the death of ten of his enemies should weigh no more heavily on Mr. Churchill's buoyant and clever mind than would a bag of grouse on his shoulder. War is all sad, and it is all wrong. It is a hideous relic of the age of stone. It is outrageous and indecent. But as it must obtain we should lend to it every semblance of dignity. If we must kill our fellow-man, let us at least, as we pass, cover his staring eyes with his helmet and as men respect a brave man. But in this campaign everything seems to have been done to degrade war, to make it even more brutal than it is; to callous the mind toward it; to rob it of all of its possible heroism and terrible magnificence. We have the incident of the British officer who protested loudly against General Cronje receiving a cigar when he asked for one; of another who distributed Mrs. Cronje's wisp of false hair as a souvenir to his brother officers; of Captain C. of the Scots Greys, who photographed the Boers while the Tommies bayoneted them. These incidents make warfare worse than brutal. It becomes vulgar.

I prefer to remember that Admiral Cervera

sent an officer to the American Admiral to assure him of the safety of Hobson and his crew after they had attempted to bottle up the Spanish fleet, and to congratulate him on their courage, and that Captain Phillips called to his men when they had sunk the Spanish battleship, "Don't cheer! those men are drowning!"

It was actually a relief to reach Pretoria, where one hears the war discussed without violence, abuse, or exaggeration, where the death of one or of many of the enemy is spoken of, not with rejoicing, but with regret; where his reckless bravery is admired and condoned as a fault of youth, and where men whose bullets I dodged at Pieter's Hill from the English lines listen to my side of the story of the same fight without prejudice or suspicion or ill-will.

If the English must abuse someone they might begin on all of their own generals, with the exception of Lord Roberts, Sir George White, General French, and Baden-Powell, and might court-martial three or four of the others. Then the prestige of their arms would rise again. For no one can blame a man who

employs incapable servants, until they have proved themselves so.

The English generals have been tried and found wanting. On this occasion it was the fault of the generals; should Great Britain make use of them again it will be her fault. It was her misfortune that hers should be the first of the great armies of the Old World to wage war under modern conditions, and this war which England forced upon the Boer is helping to educate Europe. The Powers are learning through Great Britain's mistakes and expenditure of life and money what not to do. They are strengthening themselves at her expense. But Great Britain is not learning. Instead of recalling the men who have blundered, and proclaiming by so doing that the standard of her army is still what we all used to believe it to be, she shields them, once more sends them forward and begs them not to do it again. The British War Office is not adaptable, it cannot change in midstream, it cannot pick out the natural leader and throw over the general made at Aldershot and at the Guards Club.

England, instead of admitting that she has

been mistaken, that the man whom she supposed to be the great leader of men, is, after all, only a dull butcher who continually butts his head against a stone wall and who has lost her more men by his lack of wit than the Boers have killed with their rifles, sends him on again to Van Reenan's Pass to butcher more Tommies, to butt his head against more stone walls. Wellington held back Napoleon and defeated the greatest army of veterans of this century at Waterloo, with a loss of 7,000 men. It cost Buller 5,000 men to relieve Ladysmith.

With the exception of the capture of Cronje by Lord Roberts, which, after all, was the capture of 3,000 men by 20,000, with 20,000 more hurrying up in reserve, there has not been in six months a single British victory except of a negative character. If you think over it you will find that the men who so far have made reputations out of this war have done so by holding their own, not by advancing on the enemy or entering his territory. I do not consider Lord Roberts, as his reputation was made many years ago.

But the men who have won distinction in this war are Sir George White, who held his

own at Ladysmith; Baden-Powell, who held his own at Mafeking; French, who relieved Ladysmith; Winston Churchill, who escaped from prison; and Bugler Dunn, to whom the Queen gave her portrait and a silver bugle. That is rather a light showing after six months' continuous fighting, especially if against that list of heroes you should place in parallel column a list of men who have failed—Kitchener, who lost 1,100 men at Paadersburg, and was in consequence sent to do police work among the rebels; Buller, Methuen, Gatacre, Warren, Broadwood, Coleman, and Long. It is like reading the tombstones in a graveyard.

Compare that list with the list of men who came out of the Spanish-American War with a record of something attempted and something done. I do not make this comparison as an American, but because it illustrates that in war, which is the most difficult of all professions, intelligence is the only thing which should count. It is not years of service; if it were, the man who has been night watchman at a bank for thirty years might lay claim to the position of cashier. It is intelligence, and again intelligence.

Buller has a dozen ribbons; all the other English generals have seen service in at least a half-dozen campaigns. But bravery we take for granted, and experience counts for nothing, service counts for nothing, training counts for nothing, without an intelligent mind to make use of them and to direct them. Theodore Roosevelt, who never saw a battle until he went to Cuba, but who is abnormally intelligent, would make a better general to-day than any of these gentlemen who have conducted army corps along the Modder River and the Tugela.

In three months there came out of the crucible of our little war Dewey, Sampson, Schley, Roosevelt, Hobson, and Leonard Wood, who in six weeks was promoted from the rank of captain to that of brigadier-general, and in three months was a major-general and Governor of Santiago, and who is now Governor-General of the whole island of Cuba. All these men did something; they sank a fleet or took a fort: they showed intelligent executive ability. They did not merely "hold their own," nor conduct a masterly retreat. Dewey was not an accident. He was not sent to

Manila on account of his place in the line of promotion, but he was selected from among others because he was known to be of exceptional intelligence; Sampson was also pushed over the heads of the commodores who ranked him, for the same reason.

We sought out intelligence and we rewarded intelligence. Miley when he went to Cuba was only a first lieutenant, and he came out of the war a lieutenant-colonel, and no one deserved promotion more and no one while he lived, through the increased influence which his promotion gave him, was of greater service to the army. But it would have been impossible for Leonard Wood to rise in the British Army in three months from the rank of captain to that of brigadier-general. Napoleon could not have done it. It would have been against the precedent and traditions of the British War Office.

I am not sure that they have any Napoleons or Mileys or Funstons or Woods in the regimental ranks of the British Army, but if they are there, they will remain concealed until this war is over. Twenty years from now they may obtain command, but the British War Office

cannot in six months adapt itself to new conditions, nor face new facts, nor turn upon its history and recognize new men.

We all were with Great Britain as soon as her difficulties began. We had not forgotten how she came to our aid when, without her help, a coalition of the Powers might have put us to sore humiliation. But she must see now that her difficulties ran on for too long a time. The under dog at which "the lion and her cubs" had been snarling and snapping made too strong, too manly, too intelligent a fight for his liberty for one to sympathize any longer with the lion's blunders and hysteria and rampant, impotent patriotism.

During this crisis the Englishman did not, unfortunately, see himself as others saw him. He acted and talked and wrote as extravagantly about this little war as he would had the combined fleets and armies of the whole world attacked his island home. He stamped his foot and sang "Britons never, never shall be slaves," when nobody wanted to make him a slave, and he recited the "Absent-Minded Beggar" on all public occasions, and wore a necktie of the national colors as though the

foeman's foot were already on his shore, instead of seeing, as everyone else saw, that after forcing a war most insolently and barefacedly on one of the smallest governments on the globe, that smallest government was giving him for six months a severe and humiliating thrashing.

It is well not to know when you are being beaten, but it is also admirable to be able to see when you are making yourself ridiculous. It is the Englishman's failure to see this latter which leads him still to sing "Let 'em all come" in the music-halls, when so far he has not been able to whip, not all, but even one of 'em, and that one the smallest of the lot.

CHAPTER VI

PRESIDENT KRUGER

THE most interesting man in the Boer capital is Paul Kruger, who is possibly also the man of the greatest interest in the world to-day; a man who, in spite of his present prominence in the world, lives in the capital of his republic as simply as a village lawyer. Every day, for the few brief moments during which he is driven from his cottage to the Government Buildings, surrounded by a mounted guard of honor, he rises to a degree of state to which our own President does not attain. But for the remainder of the day he sits on his front porch or in his little parlor and arranges the affairs of his government with as little display as that shown by the poorest of his burghers. On the stoop, separated from the sidewalk by only a bed of flowers, you may at almost any hour you pass see the President smoking his pipe and sipping his

The President's State-Carriage.

coffee. This simplicity and democracy and infinitely to the interest he holds for you as a man. It is, of course, much more effective than any show of state. The man is so much bigger than his surroundings that his gilded carriage and troop of helmeted police do not in any way increase his dignity, neither to the burgher who never before has seen a gilt carriage, nor to the High Commissioner of Her Majesty, who has ridden in a gilt carriage of his own. The first time I heard him speak was when he received the Irish-Americans who came from Chicago to join the Transvaal Army. They were drawn up along the front of the cottage in a double line, and while he waited for the arrival of the State Secretary, Mr. Reitz, who was to act as interpreter, the President sat on the porch and regarded them through his black spectacles. When Mr. Reitz came, the President walked out to the sidewalk, and Colonel Blake, the commander of the Irish Brigade, introduced Captain O'Connor of the Chicago contingent. The President said that it was to be expected that men should come from the country which had always stood for the liberty and for the inde-

penaence of the individual; that the cause for which they had come to fight was one upon which the Lord had looked with favor; and that even though they died in this war they must feel that they were acting as His servants and had died in His service. He then instructed them, much as a father talking to a group of school-boys, that they must obey their commanders and that their commanders must obey the generals of the Transvaal. Then he spoke more rapidly and inarticulately, so that we guessed it was something of great moment that we were about to hear; but it proved on translation that he was enjoining them to be very careful of their ponies, not to ride them too hard, nor to lame them. Mr. Reitz translated this rather grudgingly, as though he wished the President would speak a few more words of welcome and of thanks for the sacrifice the men were about to make. But the President had the care of the State's ponies at heart and reiterated his injunctions concerning them. He then bowed and turned into his cottage. I think he left the Irish boys a little puzzled, as they had expected oratory of an unusual order; but nevertheless

President Kruger Reviewing the Irish-American Brigade.

they cheered him very heartily, and then O'Shea, who is the tenor of the troop, cleared his throat and sang a hymn. Possibly had the President known the Irish boys better he would have been as much surprised by this act on their part as his own performance had puzzled them. "Jerusalem" was the hymn O'Shea sang, and the picture the men made as they stood under the trees joining in the chorus was a very curious one. They were all armed and with bandoliers crossed over their chests, and gathered around them were a few Boers and a crowd of school-children who had ridden up on their bicycles to see what was going forward. I do not know whether they sang "Jerusalem" in order to please the President or as a sort of battle-hymn, but whatever the motive, it was very effective. They said afterward that they thought President Kruger was a very fine gentleman, but that somehow he had "scared" them.

My first meeting with President Kruger was very brief, and I learned little from it of him then which has not been made familiar to everyone. Mr. Reitz brought me to his house and we sat on his porch, he loading and re-

loading his cavernous pipe the while and staring out into the street. The thing that impressed me first was that in spite of his many years his great bulk and height gave you an impression of strength and power which was increased by the force he was able to put into his abrupt gestures. He gesticulated awkwardly but with the vigor of a young man, throwing out his arm as though he were pitching a quoit, and opening his great fingers and clinching them again in a menacing fist, with which he struck upon his knee. When he spoke he looked neither at the State Secretary nor at me, but out into the street; and when he did look at one, his eyes held no expression, but were like those in a jade idol. His whole face, chiefly, I think, because of the eyes, was like a heavy waxen mask. In speaking, his lips moved and most violently, but every other feature of his face remained absolutely set. In his ears he wore little gold rings, and his eyes, which were red and seared with some disease, were protected from the light by great gold-rimmed spectacles of dark glass with wire screens.

So many men had come see him and to ask

him to talk on a subject for which the day for talk was past, that he had grown properly weary of it all; and before I could ask him for the particular information I hoped to obtain, he said, "I say what I have said before, we are fighting for our independence." He kept repeating this stubbornly several times, and then spoke more specifically, saying, "They are two hundred thousand, we are thirty thousand." "They have turned the black men on the border against us." "We have all their prisoners to feed." "It is like a big bully fighting a boy."

I asked him in what way he thought the United States could have assisted him.

"By intervention," he answered. "It can intervene."

I pointed out that the President had already offered to intervene and had been snubbed for so doing, and that it was not at all probable that he would do so again, but that there was much sympathy in America; that there were many people anxious to help the Transvaal, and I asked him to suggest how they might put their sympathy to account.

"They have sent us a great deal of money

for the Red Cross," he said, "and many of them have come to fight; but we cannot pay the passage money for others to come here, and we cannot ask for help. If they give us sympathy, or money, or men, that is good and it is welcome. We thank them. But we will not ask for help." He struck his knee and pointed out into the street, talking so rapidly and violently that the words seemed as though they must be unintelligible to everyone. But Mr. Reitz said that the President had returned again to the simile of the big bully and the little boy.

"Suppose a man walking in the street sees the big bully beating the boy and passes on without helping him," was what the President had said when he spoke so excitedly. "It is no excuse for him to say after the boy is dead, 'The boy did not call to me for help.' We shall not ask for help. They can see for themselves. They need not wait for us to ask."

He talked on other subjects: of Villebois-Mareuil, the French colonel, of whom he said, "When I heard he had been killed, I felt as though I had heard of the death of my own brother;" and of George W. Steevens, whose

The President on His Veranda.

Showing One of the Marble Lions Presented to Him by Barney Barnato.

letters, which had been captured from Kaffir runners from Ladysmith, I wanted him to return to Alfred Harmsworth, the proprietor of the *Daily Mail*. The President said he had not known that the Government was in possession of any of Steevens's letters, and Secretary Reitz said he was also ignorant of the fact. But he assured me that he would at once make search for them and return them to Mrs. Steevens.

But the greater part of what the President said was a repetition of what I have written—the injustice of the English, the fact that his people fought only to protect their liberty, and the unfairness of the odds against them. In many ways he reminded me greatly of one of our own presidents, Mr. Cleveland. Both men have a strangely similar energy in speaking, a manner of stating a fact as aggressively and stubbornly as though they were being contradicted. There is also something similar in the impressiveness of their build and size which seems fitting with a big mind and strong will; something similar even in the little trick each has of shaking his head when an idea is presented to him which annoys him, as though he

could brush away its truth with a gesture, and in the way neither of them looks at the person to whom he speaks. Resolution, enormous will-power, and a supreme courage of conviction are the qualities in both which after you have left them are still uppermost in your memory.

I called at President Kruger's house a few hours before he left Pretoria for Machadodorp. I was glad I had seen him then. It seemed to me that no man at the moment when he is going into exile from his home, and the home also of the Government of which he is the chief, could have borne himself more calmly, with greater dignity, or with a better spirit. The Secretary of War had asked me to come to the President's cottage to witness the presentation of a message of sympathy signed by twenty-nine hundred Philadelphia school-boys.

It had been brought to Pretoria that morning by a boy sixteen years old named Jimmy Smith, belonging to the messenger service of New York City. If ever the President needed sympathy he needed it then, three hours before he was to leave his capital and seek refuge in the mountains, and although he was in the

confusion of departure and giving last orders to his cabinet officers and generals, he found time to receive the address and to be civil to the boy who presented it.

In one way the arrival of any message of sympathy at just that moment was most opportune; from another point of view it was almost too opportune. The message had been sent by the boys to express sympathy with a man who, at the time it was written, was fighting victoriously for a cause with which they were in sympathy. But it arrived when the cause was a lost one, and so it seemed as though their sympathy was meant for the man himself, because he had lost. It was perhaps not the happiest moment the school-boys could have chosen for saying that they were sorry for a man old enough to be their great-grandfather.

Apart from that, which, after all, was no fault of the sympathizers, the picture made by the Boer President, and the New York messenger boy staggering under his great roll of signatures, was a pathetic and curious one.

If it had not been pathetic it would have been absurd. At one end of the dark, low-ceilinged room stood the man who, as a boy of

ten in the great trek of 1836, had fled before the British, and who since then had been twice driven to seek a new home in the wilderness. He was now, at the age of seventy years, once more going forth, again evicted by the English, to hide like a wounded lion among the rocks of his mountains. Opposite him was the frightened, red-haired messenger boy from Broadway, squeezing his cap under his elbow, and holding out the roll of signatures in a leather box before him.

"Your Excellency," stammered Jimmy Smith.

It was the beginning of the oration he had rehearsed in dark corners of the deck to the waves of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Kruger stooped and peered down at Jimmy Smith like a giant ogre. One almost expected to see him pinch Jimmy Smith to find out if he were properly fattened for eating. But instead he took Jimmy's hand and shook it gravely. Then he turned, and, according to the Boer custom, shook hands with everyone else in the room, leaving Jimmy's speech suspended and helpless in midair. It was a terrible moment.

"Jimmy" Smith, who Presented the Message of Sympathy to President Kruger.

Each of us was as nervously anxious to have that speech delivered as though Jimmy were his only son.

It reminded me of a little girl I once saw who was to christen a battle-ship, and who vainly tried to hit it with the champagne bottle as it slipped steadily out of her reach. But Jimmy was not going to allow the President to slip away from him.

"Your Excellency," he began again, in an excited, boyish treble.

The President stopped and looked about him as though someone had tugged at his sleeve, and Jimmy rushed on impetuously, running the words together. "I have been chosen to convey to you this message of sympathy, signed by twenty-nine hundred schoolboys of Philadelphia, which I now have the honor to present."

He stopped with a sigh of content, and we all breathed again. Jimmy dropped his hat and held out the box with its roll of signatures. The President fingered it, turning the roll over as he asked the Secretary of State to explain.

Secretary Reitz took out the message, which

was written in English and in Dutch, and, as he did not see the Dutch version, translated the one in English.

The message set forth that it was fitting that the children of the city which had first declared for independence against Great Britain should send a greeting of sympathy to the leader of the people who were in their turn fighting for their independence against the same nation.

President Kruger nodded solemnly, muttering his approval, and was about to make a speech of thanks in return when Mr. Sutherland, who had accompanied Jimmy Smith as guide, philosopher, and friend, whispered to Mr. Reitz that he also had something to present.

Mr. Sutherland's gift was a large and richly decorated album, containing a history of the Boer war made up from newspaper clippings, caricatures, and pictures and photographs. It was incased in a huge leather trunklike box, with a lid fastened by a lock and two clasps.

Mr. Sutherland lowered the box to the floor at the feet of the President, and without the

ceremony of another speech attempted to open the lid. The box looked like a large dress-suit case, and as no one had been told what it contained, the interest of all was deeply engaged. The President stepped back gingerly and surveyed it with an expression of some misgiving. He looked as though he were in doubt as to whether it might be a service of silver-plate or an infernal machine.

In the meanwhile we had all become painfully conscious of the fact that Sutherland was having trouble with the lid. There was not enough time in which to have trouble with the lid, for, as it was, Jimmy Smith's audience had been snatched from the momentous minutes of a war council, and the President's horses, which were to carry him from his home, were standing already "inspanned" in his stable.

A full knowledge of this made Mr. Sutherland blush crimson in embarrassment. He breathed quickly, and as he struggled with the lock the perspiration flowed from his forehead. There was an eager and excited chorus of whispered suggestions and advice. Moved with sympathy, Secretary Reitz and Mr. Gob-

ler, the Secretary of War, sank to their knees beside Mr. Sutherland and all three pulled and pried violently at the obdurate lid.

Mr. James Archibald, the war correspondent, who is never at a loss, felt hurriedly in his pocket for a knife, and finding none, produced a half-crown, with which he endeavored to pick the lock. But the half-crown proved inadequate when used as a burglar's jimmy, and the lock remained intact and immovable. The Secretary of War had been holding his hat, but finding that in his efforts he needed both his hands he mechanically placed it on the back of his head. Mr. Reitz saw this, and under cover of the general perturbation whispered to him anxiously to take it off.

In the meantime President Kruger's interest in the mysterious box had increased greatly, and he came forward and bent over his two secretaries with his hands on his knees, peering down at the lock with absolute lack of self-consciousness.

It was another happy thought of Archibald, who is ever calm and collected, even when the bullets fly, that relieved a situation which was rapidly becoming tragic.

"Sutherland," Archibald whispered, hoarsely, "haven't you got a key?"

"A what?" gasped Sutherland, looking up. "A key? Yes."

"Then use it!" commanded the war correspondent, sternly.

Sutherland produced the key, turned the lock, and opened the lid. For the second time everyone in the room breathed freely. President Kruger pushed forward and peered down at the great gold and vellum album in its leather case. He straightened himself with a pleased sigh and smiled at Sutherland, nodding at him approvingly.

"It is a Bible," he said.

The mistake was so in character that as we grasped it and heard the simple note of real pleasure in his voice I believe every man in the room would have given half a month's wages to have changed that album into what Kruger believed it to be.

"No; a history of the war," Reitz exclaimed, hastily, turning over the pages and showing the President pictures of himself, of Boer laagers, and of his generals. But the President shook his head and closed the big volume. He beckoned

to General Meyer, who had been impatiently waiting.

"Tell them I thank them," he said to Reitz. "Tell them I am much obliged for the message and for the history. They must go now."

He held out his hand again to Jimmy Smith and Sutherland, the last Americans to shake it before he went out into the mountains.

That was my last sight of President Kruger.

CHAPTER VII

THE ENGLISH PRISONERS

STRANGELY enough, the chief sign of war in Pretoria is not shown by the Boers themselves, but in the presence at the capital of the English prisoners. Every night when the town is hidden in darkness there arise from outside its narrow boundaries the two great circles of electric lights which shine down upon the Pretoria race-course and the camp of the British officers. When you drive home from some dinner, when you bid the visitor "good-night," and turn for a look at the sleeping town, the last things that meet your eyes are these blazing, vigilant policemen's lanterns, making for the prisoner an endless day, pointing out his every movement, showing him in a shameless glare.

When the first of the prisoners began to arrive at the capital they were placed in the Pretoria race-course, which had also been the

temporary home of the Jameson Raiders; but later the officers were moved into the residential quarter of the town, which is a pretty suburb called Sunnyside.

There they were given accommodations in the Model School House, until for several reasons they again were moved, this time into a camp especially prepared for them on the side of a hill, at the opposite edge of the town. In the meanwhile the number of captured Tommies had increased to such proportions that they were taken several miles from the city to an immense camp at Waterval, and the racecourse was reserved for civil prisoners and a hospital for those who were sick or wounded.

The officers were very comfortable at the Model School House, and in comparison with what the camp offers them the change was for the worse. The school-house is just what its name suggests, a model school, with high, well-ventilated, well-lighted rooms, broad halls, and, what must have been particularly welcome to the Englishman, a perfectly appointed gymnasium and a good lawn-tennis court. It is a handsome building outside, and when the officers used to sit reading and smoking on its broad verandas,

British Prisoners.

one might have mistaken it for a club. They were given a piano and all the books and writing-material they wanted, they could see the calm life of Pretoria passing in the street before them, and, on the whole, were exceedingly well off. It is the tradition of many wars that the generous enemy treats his prisoners with a consideration equal to or even greater than that which he gives to his own men. The moment his enemy surrenders he becomes his guest, and the Boers certainly provided much better accommodations for the officers than those to which their own men are accustomed either in the field or at home. The attitude of the prisoner to his enemy should be no less courteous. But the British officers, in their contempt for their captors, behaved in a most unsportsmanlike, ungentlemanly, and, for their own good, a most foolish manner. They drew offensive caricatures of the Boers over the walls of the schoolhouse, destroyed the children's copy-books and text-books, which certainly was a silly performance, and were rude and "cheeky" to the Boer officials, boasting of what their fellow-soldiers would do to them when they took Pretoria. Their chief offence, however, was in speaking

to and shouting at the ladies and young girls who walked past the school-house. Personally, I cannot see why being a prisoner would make me think I might speak to women I did not know; but some of the English officers apparently thought their new condition carried that privilege with it. I do not believe that every one of them misbehaved in this fashion, but it was true of so many that their misconduct brought discredit on all. Some people say that the young girls walked by for the express purpose of being spoken to; and a few undoubtedly did, and one of them was even arrested, after the escape of a well-known war correspondent, on suspicion of having assisted him. But, on the other hand, any number of older women, both Boer and English, have told me that they found it quite impossible to pass the school-house on account of the insulting remarks the officers on the veranda threw to one another concerning them, or made directly to them. At last the officers grew so offensive that a large number of ladies signed a petition and sent it to the Government complaining that the presence of the Englishmen in the heart of the town was a public nuisance. It was partly

in consequence of this, and more probably because the number of the prisoners had increased so greatly that there was no longer room for them in the school-house, that they were removed from their comfortable quarters, and sent to the camp.

When I went to see them there, the fact that I was accompanied by a Boer officer did not in the least deter them from abusing and ridiculing his countrymen to me in his presence, so that what little service I had planned to render them was made impossible. After they had sneered and jeered at the Boer official in my hearing, I could not very well turn around and ask him to grant them favors. It was a great surprise to me. I had thought the English officer would remain an officer under any circumstances. When one has refused to fight further with a rifle, it is not becoming to continue the fight with the tongue, nor to insult the man from whom you have begged for mercy. It is not, as Englishmen say, "playing the game." It is not "cricket." You cannot ask a man to spare your life, which is what surrendering really means, and then treat him as you would the gutter-snipe who runs to open

the door of your hansom. Some day we shall wake up to the fact that the Englishman, in spite of his universal reputation to the contrary, is not a good sportsman because he is not a good loser. As Captain Hanks said when someone asked him what he thought of the Englishman as a sportsman, "He is the cheerfulest winner I ever met."

There were many sober-minded ones among the prisoners, and one of these devoted himself to covering the walls of a room in the schoolhouse with maps of Natal and of the Orange Free State. These maps were so remarkably well executed that the Director of the school has preserved them for the education of the children. He even wrote to the Government officials asking them to invite the officer who had made the maps to return daily from the camp and complete one he had begun of the Transvaal. I told the officer in camp of this, and he was much amused and pleased, and said he would be only too happy to oblige them.

The escape of Winston Churchill also helped toward the removal of the officers from the centre of Sunnyside to a more secluded spot, although the difficulty of the escape really be-

gan after Churchill was clear of Pretoria. His first danger, which was in leaving the schoolhouse, was removed by the fact that when he slipped over the fence the sentry was looking the other way, either by accident or "for revenue only," as is variously stated. After Churchill was once in the street he was comparatively safe, as there were so many strange uniforms in the Boer Army that a man in full khaki might walk through the streets of Pretoria unchallenged. It was the long journey through the country which made the leave-taking of Churchill, and later of three brother officers, remarkable.

The chances of escape from the camp are almost impossible. It might be done, however, by tunnelling under the fence, or by cutting the wires of the tell-tale electric lights, and, after throwing mattresses over the barbed-wire entanglements, scrambling over them into the darkness. If this were done at many different points along the fence, some men would undoubtedly get away, and the others would undoubtedly be shot.

I visited the camp only once and found it infinitely depressing. The officers are enclosed

in a rectangular barbed-wire fencing about as high as a man's head and one hundred and fifty yards in length, and about fifty yards across at either end. At one corner of this is a double gate, studded with barbed wire and guarded by turn-keys. The whole is a sort of a pen into which the officers are herded like zebras at the zoo. Innumerable electric lights are placed at close intervals along the line of this wire fencing, and make the camp as brilliant as a Fall River boat by night. There is not a corner in it in which one could not read fine print. In the middle of the enclosure there is a long corrugated-zinc building with a corrugated-zinc roof. It is hot by day and cold by night and is badly ventilated. At one end are some excellently arranged bath-rooms with shower-baths, and at the other the kitchen and mess-room. The mess-room is as bare as an earth floor, deal tables and benches, and zinc walls can make it. In the sleeping apartment one hundred and forty-two cots are placed almost touching each other. They are in four long rows with two aisles running between. There is no flooring to this building, but slips of oil-cloth stretch down the two aisles. In between the cots the

red dust settles freely. There is, of course, no possible privacy, although some of the men have surrounded their beds with temporary screens, and the wall at the head of almost every cot is covered with a strip of blanket or colored cloth, and on this the owner of the bed has pinned pictures from the illustrated weekly papers. It makes the long room look less like a barrack than the children's ward of a hospital. If one can decide from the number of their portraits, the Queen and Marie Studholme seemed to be, with the imprisoned officers, the most popular of all English people, with Lord Roberts a close third. In judging the treatment the Boers have meted out to their prisoners, one must remember that the cots in the zinc shed, the mess-hall, and the bath-rooms are as luxurious as anything to which the majority of the Boers are accustomed. We must take his point of view as to what is comfortable and luxurious, not that of men accustomed to White's and Bachelors'. It is also to be considered that had the officers been decently civil to the Boers, which need not have been difficult for gentlemen—for I have never met an uncivil Boer—they

might have been treated with even greater leniency.

The camp seemed to me worse than any prison of stone and iron bars that I have ever visited, because it showed freedom so near at hand. The great hills, the red-roofed houses, the trees by the spruit which runs only a hundred yards below the camp, the men and women passing at will beyond the dead line of fifty yards, the cattle grazing, the clouds drifting overhead, all seemed to tantalize and mock at the men, who are not shut off from it by a blind wall, but who can see it clearly through the open cat's cradle of tangled wire.

I went to the prison with Captain Von Lossberg of the Free State Artillery. He himself had taken several prisoners at Sannahspost and was returning to them a Bible and two prayer-books which he had found in their captured kits and which had been given to these officers before they left England by their children. From this the officers could not have thought that he had come to gloat over them, and the fact that he was in an equally bad plight with themselves, with his head in bandages and his arm in a sling owing

to their shrapnel and Lee-Metfords, might have appealed to them in his favor. But in spite of his reason for coming, one of them was so exceedingly insulting to him that Von Lossberg told the man that if he had him on the outside of the barbed wire he would thrash him. His brother officers ordered the fellow to be quiet and hustled him away.

I was surprised to find that the habitual desire of the Englishman to be left severely to himself did not follow him into prison. I had expected that I should walk around with the Boer officer, who was sent with me to see that I did not say anything to the officers which I should not, in as lonely state as though I wore a cloak of invisibility. On the contrary, almost all of the prisoners came up at once and gazed and asked questions. Their eagerness over the slight variety which our coming brought to the awful routine of the prison camp, their desire to learn some new thing, to get a fresh whiff of knowledge from the outside world, was so pathetic and disturbing that I do not know that I ever spent a more uncomfortable hour. The Commission on Prisoners do not allow the officers to hear any news of the war

except as it is misrepresented in the *Volksstem*, a single sheet of no value. It is a foolish and unnecessarily hard restriction, but as it exists I had to obey it and was not able to tell the officers anything that they cared to know. Some of them played the game most considerately, appreciating that I could not answer certain questions; but others, when I did not answer, or pretended not to hear, abused the Boers violently, which made it most unpleasant for the Boer officer with me, and did not help to make me more loquacious. But these men were the exception. The majority were only too glad to gain any information from outside without wasting time abusing anybody.

Before the electric lights were lit we stood outside the zinc shed near the gate, and as it grew dark they separated me from my Boer guide and crowded in closer, so that in the dusk I could only see vague outlines of figures and hear voices whispering questions without seeing from where they came. Those nearest me, under cover of these voices from the outside circles, pressed me for some word as to the chance of their release, the probable length of their imprisonment, the nearness of the at-

The Bathing-Tank for the Privates at Waterval.

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HAPTER VIII

HT BEFORE THE BATTLE

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CHAPTER VIII

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE BATTLE

THE night we started for "the front," the front was at Brandfort, but before our train drew out of Pretoria Station the arrivals from Johannesburg told us that the English had just occupied Brandfort, and that the front had been pushed back to Winburg.

Captain Von Lossberg of the Lossberg Artillery, who was guiding me through the Free State, explained that Brandfort was an impossible position to hold anyway, and that we had better leave the train at Winburg. We found some selfish consolation for the Boer repulse in the fact that it shortened our railroad journey by one day. The next morning when we awoke at the Vaal River Station the train-despatcher informed us that during the night the "Rooineks" had taken Winburg and that the burghers were gathered at Smaaldel.

We agreed not to go to Winburg, but to

stop off at Smaaldel. We also agreed that the British advance was only what might have been expected, and that Winburg was an impossible position to hold. When at eleven o'clock the train reached Kroonstad, we learned that Lord Roberts was in Smaaldel. It was then evident that if our train kept on and the British army kept on there would be a collision, so we stopped at Kroonstad. In talking it over we decided, that owing to its situation, Smaaldel was an impossible position to hold.

Kroonstad is like most of the towns and small cities of South Africa, unfinished, very much out of doors, unhomelike. They all bear the same resemblance to the towns on our eastern seaboard which a barb-wire fence bears to the gray lichen-covered stone walls of New England, or to the thick flower-scented hedges of old England. Personally, I cannot understand why the South African colonial should prefer a barb-wire fence and all that it entails, to a stone fence or a hedge and all that goes with them. But then it is difficult to understand the point of view of the South African colonial on any subject.

At the time of our arrival Kroonstad was

the capital, "once removed," where, after its eviction from Bloemfontein, the Government had set up housekeeping, and its head-quarters were situated in Hermann's Hotel, which it had "commandeered." But in spite of the fact that everyone in the Government service was balanced on one foot and poised for instant flight, he attended to his duties as calmly and discreetly as though he were the perpetual secretary of the French Institute. In what had been the public rooms of the hotel were huge heaps of official documents, requisition papers, orders to commandoes, passports, proclamations, and Government notices, and in strange contrast to these were the furnishings and decorations of the hotel itself—the tariff of meals, the rules for billiards, and the illustrated advertisements of ales, Cape wines, and Scotch whiskies, and the gaudy chromos of the imperial family of Germany and of the Queen of Holland.

The Sand River, which runs about forty miles south of Kroonstad, was the last place in the Free State at which the burghers could hope to make a stand, and at the bridge where the railroad spans the river, and at a drift ten miles

lower down, the Boers and Free Staters had collected to the number of four thousand. Lord Roberts and his advancing column, which was known to contain 35,000 men, were a few miles distant from the opposite bank of the Sand River. There was an equal chance that Lord Roberts would attempt to cross at the drift over at the bridge. But as Von Lossberg's Artillery was at the drift we had no choice but to go there. We stopped on our way for the night at Ventersburg, a town ten miles from the river.

Von Lossberg is a young naturalized American who was formerly an officer in the German Emperor's Second Guard Regiment. He served in Cuba as an officer of one of the Louisiana regiments, and when the war broke out in South Africa volunteered for service there with the Free State. At DeVetsburg he was wounded in the head with four pieces of shrapnel, and his men, thinking he was killed, started to run away, but he caught a pony and, wounded as he was, rode after them and brought them back. He continued to serve his guns until an hour later, when he was shot through the ribs and one arm with a bullet. He then with-

drew his battery in good order and rode twelve miles with the ends of the broken rib rubbing together. In spite of this severe knocking about, when he returned with me to the Sand River he had been absent from his battery only a little over two weeks. When we met President Steyn on the road to the river, the President put his hand on Lossberg's shoulder and said: "This is an American you should be proud of. We certainly are." It must have been on the strength of that that Lossberg commandeered the President's field-glasses from off his shoulder, explaining that they would be of more use to his gunners than to a fugitive President.

Ventersburg, in comparison with Kroonstad, where we had left them rounding up stray burghers and hurrying them to the front, and burning official documents in the streets, was calm.

Ventersburg was not destroying incriminating documents nor driving weary burghers from its solitary street. It was making them welcome at Jones's Hotel. The sun had sunk an angry crimson, the sure sign, so they said, of a bloody battle on the morrow, and a full moon had

turned the dusty street and the veldt into which it disappeared into a field of snow.

The American scouts had halted at Jones's Hotel, and the American proprietor was giving them drinks free. Their cowboy spurs jingled on the floor of the bar-room, on the boards of the verandas, on the stone floor of the kitchen and in the billiard-room, where they were playing pool as joyously as though the English were not ten miles away. Grave, awkward burghers rode up, each in a cloud of dust, and leaving his pony to wander in the street and his rifle in a corner, shook hands with everyone solemnly and asked for coffee. Italians of Garibaldi's red-shirted army, Swedes and Danes in semi-uniform, Frenchmen in high boots and great sombreros, Germans with the sabre cuts on their cheeks that had been given them at the university, and Russian officers smoking tiny cigarettes, crowded the little dining-room, and by the light of a smoky lamp talked in many tongues of Spion Kop, Sannahspost, Fourteen Streams, and the battle on the morrow.

They were sun-tanned, dusty, stained, and many of them with wounds in bandages. They

came from every capital of Europe, and as each took his turn around the crowded table, they drank to the health of every nation, save one. When they had eaten they picked up the pony's bridle from the dust and melted into the moonlight with a wave of the hand and a "good luck to you." There were no bugles to sound "boots and saddles" for them, no sergeants to keep them in hand, no officers to pay for their rations and issue orders.

Each was his own officer, his conscience was his bugle-call, he gave himself orders. They were all equal, all friends; the cowboy and the Russian Prince, the French socialist from La Villette or Montmartre, with a red sash around his velveteen breeches, and the little French nobleman from the Cercle Royal who had never before felt the sun, except when he had played lawn tennis on the Isle de Puteaux. Each had his bandolier and rifle; each was minding his own business, which was the business of all—to try and save the independence of a free people.

The presence of these foreigners, with rifle in hand, showed the sentiment and sympathies of the countries from which they came. These

men were Europe's real ambassadors to the Republic of the Transvaal. The hundreds of thousands of their countrymen who had remained at home held toward the Boer the same feelings they did, but they were not so strongly moved toward him; not strongly enough to feel that they must go abroad to fight for him.

These foreigners were not the exception in opinion, they were only exceptionally adventurous and liberty-loving. They were not soldiers of fortune, for the soldier of fortune fights for gain. These men receive no pay, no emolument nor reward. They were the few who dared do what the majority of their countrymen in Europe thought.

At Jones's Hotel that night, at Ventersburg, it was as though a jury composed of men from all of Europe and the United States had gathered in judgment on the British nation, and had found it guilty of "murder with intent to rob."

Outside in the moonlight in the dusty road two bearded burghers had halted me to ask the way to the house of the commandant. Between them on a Boer pony sat a man, erect, slim-waisted, with well-set shoulders and

chin in air, one hand holding the reins high, the other with knuckles down resting on his hip. The Boer pony he rode, nor the moonlight, nor the veldt behind him, could disguise his seat and pose. It was as though I had been suddenly thrown back into London and was passing the cuirassed, gauntleted guardsman, motionless on his black charger in the sentry gate in Whitehall. Only now, instead of a steel breast-plate, he shivered through his thin khaki, and instead of the high boots, his legs were wrapped in twisted putties.

"When did they take you?" I asked.

"Early this morning. I was out scouting," he said. He spoke in so well trained and modulated a voice that I tried to see his shoulder-straps.

"Oh, you are an officer?" I said.

"No, sir, a trooper. First Life Guards."

But in the moonlight I could see him smile, whether at my mistake or because it was not a mistake I could not guess. There are many gentlemen rankers in this war.

He made a lonely figure in the night, his helmet marking him as conspicuously as a man wearing a high hat in a church. From the

billiard-room, where the American scouts were playing pool, came the click of the ivory and loud, light-hearted laughter; from the veranda the sputtering of many strange tongues and the deep, lazy voices of the Boers. There were Boers to the left of him, Boers to the right of him, pulling at their long, drooping pipes and sending up big rings of white smoke in the white moonlight.

He dismounted, and stood watching the crowd about him under half-lowered eyelids, but as unmoved as though he saw no one. He threw his arm over the pony's neck and pulled its head down against his chest and began talking to it.

It was as though he wished to emphasize his loneliness.

"You are not tired, are you? No, you're not," he said. His voice was as kindly as though he were speaking to a child.

"Oh, but you can't be tired. What?" he whispered. "A little hungry, perhaps. Yes?" He seemed to draw much comfort from his friend the pony, and the pony rubbed his head against the Englishman's shoulder.

"The commandant says he will question

you some in the morning. You will come with us to the jail now," his captor directed. "You will find three of your people there to talk to. I will go bring a blanket for you, it is getting cold." And they rode off together into the night.

Had he arrived two days later he would have heard through the windows of Jones's Hotel the billiard balls still clicking joyously, but the men who held the cues then would have been officers in helmets like his own.

The original Jones, the proprietor of Jones's Hotel, had fled when the war began. The man who succeeded him was also a refugee, and the present manager was an American from Cincinnati. He had never before kept a hotel, but he said it was not a bad business, as he found that one made a profit of a hundred per cent. on each drink sold. The proprietress was a lady from Brooklyn; her husband, another American, was a prisoner with Cronje at St. Helena. She was in considerable doubt as to whether she ought to run before the British arrived or wait and chance being made a prisoner. She said she would prefer to escape, but what with standing on her feet all day in

the kitchen preparing meals for hungry burghers and foreign volunteers, she was too tired to get away.

War close at hand consists so largely of commonplaces and trivial details that I hope I may be pardoned for recording the anxieties and cares of this lady from Brooklyn, her point of view so admirably illustrates one side of war. It is only when you are ten years away from it, or ten thousand miles away from it, that you forget the waste places and only the moments loom up which are terrible, picturesque, and momentous. We have read, in "Vanity Fair," and lately seen in a play, something of the terror and the mad haste to escape of the people of Brussels on the eve of Waterloo. That is the obvious and dramatic side.

That is the picture of war you will remember and which people prefer. They like the rumble of cannon through the streets of Ventersburg, the silent, dusty columns of the reinforcements passing in the moonlight, the galloping hoofs of the aides suddenly beating upon the night air and growing fainter and dying away, the bugle-calls from the camps along the river, the stamp of spurred boots as the

general himself enters the hotel and spreads the blue-print maps upon the table, the clanking sabres of his staff, standing behind him in the candle-light, whispering and tugging at their gauntlets while the great man plans his attack. You must stop with the British Army if you want bugle-calls and clanking sabres and gauntlets. They are a part of the panoply of war and of warriors. But we saw no warriors at Ventersburg that night, only a few cattle-breeders and farmers who were fighting for the land they had won from the lion and the bushman, and with them a mixed company of gentleman adventurers—gathered around a table discussing other days in other lands. The picture of war which is most familiar is the one of the people of Brussels fleeing from the city with the French guns booming in the distance, or as one sees it in "Shenandoah," where aids gallop on and off the stage and the night signals flash from both sides of the valley. That is the obvious and dramatic side; the other side of war is the night before the battle, at Jones's Hotel; the landlady in the dining-room with her elbows on the table, fretfully deciding that after a day in front of the cooking-stove she is too

tired to escape an invading army, declaring that the one place at which she would rather be at that moment was Green's restaurant in Philadelphia, the heated argument that immediately follows between the foreign legion and the Americans as to whether Rector's is not better than the Café de Paris, and the general agreement that Ritz cannot hope to run two hotels in London without being robbed. That is how the men talked and acted on the eve of a battle. We heard no galloping aids, no clanking spurs, only the click of the clipped billiard balls as the American scouts (who were killed thirty-six hours later) knocked them about over the torn billiard-cloth, the drip, drip, of the kerosene from a blazing, sweating lamp, which struck the dirty table-cloth with the regular ticking of a hall-clock, and the complaint of the piano from the hotel parlor, where the correspondent of a Boston paper was picking out "Hello, My Baby," laboriously with one finger. War is not so terribly dramatic or exciting—at the time; and the real trials of war—at the time, and not as one later remembers them—consist so largely in looting fodder for your ponies and in bribing the sta-

tion hands to put on an open truck in which to carry them.

We were wakened about two o'clock in the morning by a loud knocking on a door, and the distracted voice of the local justice of the peace calling upon the landlord to rouse himself and fly. The English, so the voice informed the various guests, as door after door was thrown open upon the court-yard, were at Ventersburg station, only two hours away. The justice of the peace wanted to buy or to borrow a horse, and wanted it very badly, but a sleepy-eyed and sceptical audience told him unfeelingly that he was either drunk or dreaming, and only the landlady, now apparently refreshed after her labors, was keenly, even hysterically, intent on instant flight. She sat up in her bed with her hair in curl papers and a revolver beside her, and through her open door shouted advice to her lodgers. But they were unsympathetic, and reassured her only by banging their doors and retiring with profane grumbling, until in a few moments only the voice of the justice as he fled down the main street of Ventersburg offering his kingdom for a horse broke the silence of the night.

CHAPTER IX

THE BATTLE OF SAND RIVER

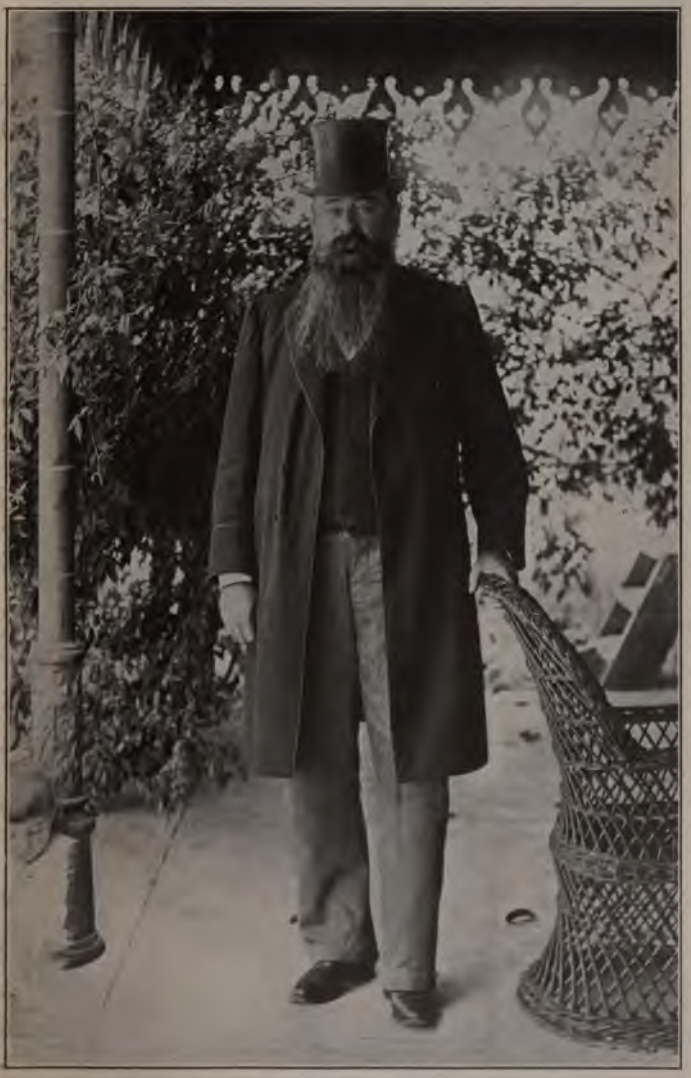
THE next morning we rode out to the Sand River to see the Boer positions near the drift, and met President Steyn in his Cape cart coming from them on his way to the bridge. Ever since the occupation of Bloemfontein, the London papers had been speaking of him as "the late President," as though he were dead. He impressed me, on the contrary, as being very much alive and very much the President, although his executive chamber was the dancing-hall of a hotel and his roof-tree the hood of a Cape cart. He stood in the middle of the road, and talked hopefully of the morrow. He had been waiting, he said, to see the development of the enemy's attack, but the British had not appeared, and, as he believed they would not advance that day, he was going on to the bridge to talk to his burghers and to consult with General Botha. He was much

more a man of the world and more the professional politician than President Kruger. I use the words "professional politician" in no unpleasant sense, but meaning rather that he was ready, tactful, and diplomatic. For instance, he gave to whatever he said the air of a confidence reserved especially for the ear of the person to whom he spoke. He showed none of the bitterness which President Kruger exhibits toward the British, but took the tone toward the English Government of the most critical and amused tolerance. Had he heard it, it would have been intensely annoying to any Englishman.

"I see that the London *Chronicle*," he said, "asks if, since I have become a rebel, I do not lose my rights as a Barrister of the Temple? Of course, we are no more rebels than the Spaniards were rebels against the United States. By a great stretch of the truth, under the suzerainty clause, the burghers of the Transvaal might be called rebels, but a Free Stater—never! It is not the animosity of the English which I mind," he added, thoughtfully, "but their depressing ignorance of their own history."

"I can do nothing with Lord Roberts," he said again, as though the English commander was a disobedient child. "I wrote him calling his attention to the fact that his troops were burning the houses in the Free State, and that such an act was contrary to the usages of civilized war. He replied that my charges were not sufficiently specific, so I wrote again specifying eighteen houses that had been burned, and supplementing my charges with affidavits. His reply was that he was too busy to attend to such details." The President shrugged his shoulders and laughed as much as to say, "What can one do with such a man?" His cheerfulness and hopefulness, even though one guessed they were assumed, commanded one's admiration. He was being hunted out of one village after another, the miles of territory still free to him were hourly shrinking—in a few days he would be a refugee in the Transvaal; but he stood in the open veldt with all his possessions in the cart behind him, a president without a republic, a man without a home, but still full of pluck, cheerful and unbeaten.

The farm-house of General Andrew Cronje stood just above the drift and was the only



President Steyn.

conspicuous mark for the English guns on our side of the river, so in order to protect it the General had turned it over to the ambulance corps to be used as a hospital. They had lashed a great Red Cross flag to the chimney and filled the clean shelves of the generously built kitchen with bottles of antiseptics and bitter-smelling drugs and surgeons' cutlery. President Steyn gave me a letter to Dr. Rodgers Reid, who was in charge, and he offered us our choice of the deserted bedrooms. It was a most welcome shelter, and in comparison to the cold veldt the hospital was a haven of comfort. Hundreds of cooing doves, stumbling over the roof of the barn, helped to fill the air with their peaceful murmur. It was a strange overture to a battle, but in time I learned to not listen for any more martial prelude. The Boer does not make a business of war, and when he is not actually fighting he pretends that he is camping out for pleasure. In his laager there are no warlike sounds, no sentries challenge, no bugle's call. He has no duties to perform, for his Kaffir boys care for his pony, gather his wood, and build his fire. He has nothing to do but to wait for the next

fight, and to make the time pass as best he can. In camp the burghers are like a party of children. They play games with each other, and play tricks upon each other, and engage in numerous wrestling bouts, a form of contest of which they seem particularly fond. They are like children also in that they are direct and simple, and as courteous as the ideal child should be. Indeed, if I were asked what struck me as the chief characteristics of the Boer I should say they were the two qualities which the English have always disallowed him, his simplicity rather than his "cuteness," and his courtesy rather than his boorishness.

The force that waited at the drift by Cronje's farm as it lay spread out on both sides of the river looked like a gathering of Wisconsin lumbermen, of Adirondack guides and hunters halted at Paul Smith's, like a Methodist camp-meeting limited entirely to men.

The eye sought in vain for rows of tents, for the horses at the picket line, for the flags that marked the head-quarters, the commissariat, the field telegraph, the field post-office, the A. S. C., the R. M. A. C., the C. O., and

all the other combinations of letters of the military alphabet.

I remembered that great army of General Buller's as I saw it stretching out over the basin of the Tugela, like the children of Israel in number, like Tammany Hall in organization and discipline, with not a tent-pin missing; with hospitals as complete as those established for a hundred years in the heart of London; with search-lights, heliographs, war balloons, Roentgen rays, pontoon bridges, telegraph wagons, and trenching tools, farriers with anvils, major-generals, map-makers, "gallopers," intelligence departments, even biographs and press-censors; every kind of thing and every kind of man that goes to make up a British army corps. I knew that seven miles from us just such another completely equipped and disciplined column was advancing to the opposite bank of the Sand River.

And opposed to it was this merry company of Boer farmers lying on the grass, toasting pieces of freshly killed ox on the end of a stick, their hobbled ponies foraging for themselves a half-mile away, a thousand men without a tent among them, without a field-glass.

It was a picnic, a pastoral scene, not a scene of war. On the hills overlooking the drift were the guns, but down along the banks the burghers were sitting in circles singing the evening hymns, many of them sung to the tunes familiar in the service of the Episcopal Church, so that it sounded like a Sunday evening in the country at home. At the drift other burghers were watering the oxen, bathing and washing in the cold river; around the camp-fires others were smoking luxuriously, with their saddles for pillows. The evening breeze brought the sweet smell of burning wood, a haze of smoke from many fires, the lazy hum of hundreds of voices rising in the open air, the neighing of many horses, and the swift soothing rush of the river.

These were the men, and this gypsy encampment was the force, which, for six months, had been holding back the "Lion and her cubs." It was holding them back no longer, for the soldiers of the Queen outnumbered the farmers ten to one, and under "England's Only General" had been taught the value of flank movements.

It is not difficult to flank an enemy when

The Boer Artillery.

you have six men to send around his ends while you attack him in the centre with the remaining four. But the unfairness of the odds was not what impressed one. It was the character of the opposing forces and the causes for which each fought.

On the one bank of the Sand was the professional soldier, who does whatever he is ordered to do. His orders this time were to kill a sufficiently large number of human beings to cause those few who might survive to throw up their hands and surrender their homes, their country, and their birthright. On the other bank were a thousand self-governing, self-respecting farmers fighting for the land they have redeemed from the lion and the savage, for the towns and cities they have reared in a beautiful wilderness.

"An Englishman's house is his castle," and he can defend it accordingly, is the oldest of English adages. The Boer has merely been defending his castle. You can make nothing more of this war than that. The Englishman will tell you there is much more to it than that, he will talk glibly of a franchise which he never wanted, of unjust mining laws

and restrictions which are much more generous than those he has instituted in British Columbia, and which he could have avoided had he not found he was growing rich in spite of them, by simply remaining in his own country; he will try to blind you by pleading that the war was forced upon him by the Boers' ultimatum, an ultimatum which came only after he had threatened the borders of the Transvaal with 20,000 soldiers.

He will present every excuse, every sophistry, every reason save one, which is that he covets the Boer's watch and chain, and is going to kill him to get it. It is too late now to go into the injustice of this war. The Boer has lost heart and is falling back, leisurely, as is his wont, but still falling back. Before this is published the end may have come and the English will be pumping the water out of the gold mines they have fought so long and so hard to win.

It is possible that the gold may repay some few of them for their losses, but it will not bring twenty thousand men back to life again; it will not restore the lost prestige of the British Army, nor pay for the ill-feeling of Europe,

nor for the loss of what was once Great Britain's hope, an alliance with the United States.

"Never envy a man his riches until you know what he did to gain them," is a saying as old as Epictetus; and who will envy England her slaughtered, bleeding republics, now that we see the price they have cost her!

Except for the excellence of her transport service, it has cost her her former place as a military power, her position as a religious nation. Even her Archbishop of Cape Town is to-day with thumbs down howling in the name of "peace" for the complete and utter extermination of the two prostrate states. It has cost her the right to speak again in the name of Christianity, for the chief loot of her soldiers is the Bibles they find upon the dead bodies of the men they have killed. It has given her a Dreyfus scandal of her own, and by the light of the homes she is burning in the Free State she can read her acts as she read the "Bulgarian atrocities."

This may seem hysterical and unjust, but it is time, now that it is too late, that we should see just what has been taking place while the world sat idly by. We have been misinformed

and blinded by a propaganda against the Boer, a manipulation of press and Parliament, which has never been equalled in dexterity of misrepresentation nor audacity of untruth, not even by the boulevard journalists who live on blackmail and the Monte Carlo Sustenance Fund.

The murder and robbery of a Boer on the veldt is no less a murder and robbery than though it had taken place in Whitechapel or on Fifth Avenue.

The Boer has been murdered and robbed; and the fact that before his life was attempted his character was attacked and vilified is not the least of the sins for which the "empire builders" of Kimberley, Johannesburg, and the Colonial Office must some day stand in judgment.

When morning came to Cronje's farm it brought with it no warning nor sign of battle. We began to believe that the British Army was an invention of the enemy's. So we cooked bacon and fed the doves, and smoked on the veranda, moving our chairs around it with the sun, and argued as to whether we should stay where we were or go on to the bridge. At noon it was evident there would be no fight at

Boer Ambulance.

the drift that day, so we started along the bank of the river, with the idea of reaching the bridge before night-fall. The trail lay on the English side of the river, so that we were in constant concern lest our white-hooded Cape cart would be seen by some of their scouts and we would be taken prisoners and forced to travel all the way back to Cape Town. We saw many herds of deer, but no scouts or lancers or any other living thing, and, such being the effect of many kopjes, lost all ideas as to where we were. We knew we were bearing steadily south toward Lord Roberts, who, as we later learned, was then some three miles distant.

About two o'clock his guns opened on our left, so we at least knew that we were still on the wrong side of the river and that we must be between the Boer and the English artillery. Except for that, our knowledge of our geographical position was a blank, and we accordingly "outspanned" and cooked more bacon. "Outspanning" is unharnessing the ponies and mules and turning them out to graze, and takes three minutes—"inspanning" is trying to catch them again, and takes from three to five hours.

We started back over the trail over which we

had come, and just at sunset saw a man appear from behind a rock and disappear again. Whether he was Boer or Briton I could not tell, but while I was examining the rock with my glasses two Boers came galloping forward and ordered me to "hands up." To sit with both arms in the air is an extremely ignominious position, and especially annoying if the pony is restless, so I compromised by waving my whip as I could reach with one hand, and still held in the horse with the other. The third man from behind the rock rode up at the same time. They said they had watched us coming from the English lines, and that we were prisoners. We assured them that for us nothing could be more satisfactory, because we now knew where we were, and because they had probably saved us a week's trip to Cape Town. They examined and approved of our credentials, and showed us the proper trail which we managed to follow until they had disappeared, when the trail disappeared also, and we were again lost in what seemed an interminable valley. But just before nightfall the fires of the commando showed in front of us and we rode into the camp of General Christian De Wet. He told

us we could not reach the bridge that night, and showed us a farm-house on a distant kopje where we could find a place to spread our blankets. I was extremely glad to meet him, as he and General Botha are the most able and brave of the Boer generals. He was big, manly, and of impressive size, and, although he speaks English, he dictated to his adjutant many long and old-world compliments to the Greater Republic across the seas. It was Christian De Wet, who at Sannahspost, captured one hundred and twenty-eight wagons and their escort without firing a shot. As the wagons entered the pass where his men were concealed he rose from behind a rock and beckoned, saying "Come in" to each driver, and although he was the only Boer in sight the men on the wagons obediently turned their teams in behind the kopje from which he had called to them. Later, when the English in the distant camp saw that the wagons instead of stretching out along the road to Bloemfontein were all huddled together, they sent two hundred of the Irregular Cavalry to learn what was wrong. De Wet allowed these men also to enter the pass and then rose up quite alone, so that he was

the only man they saw, and called to them: "Hands up. You are surrounded. My men are behind these rocks. You are—tell your officer to come forward." It is a fine picture that this Boer makes standing up alone like Roderick Dhu and bringing two hundred troopers to a halt, warning them at the same time to save their own lives. There must have been something uncanny in it, too, in this one man of giant size suddenly appearing on a barren hill-side, and in the consciousness also that every rock about him concealed a pointed rifle. When the officer in command of the cavalry rode toward him, De Wet repeated: "You are completely surrounded, sir. My burghers are hidden behind these rocks. Go back to your men and tell them to throw down their rifles and hold up their hands. If you say anything but that to them, you will be shot instantly." The officer saluted and turned, and as he rode back De Wet covered him with his rifle. The officer waited until he was within a few feet of his men, and then shouted, "Fall back," and spurred his horse to escape. At the word De Wet shot him between the shoulders, and the hidden burghers drove eighty men out of the saddle.

Boer Horses During Action Under Crest of Hill Occupied by Burghers.

Since that time General De Wet and General Botha have shown by their daring, and by always taking the initiative, how unfortunate it was for the Transvaal that the aged Joubert and the stubborn Cronje were in command of the Boer forces throughout the most critical portion of the war.

Even after Lord Roberts had occupied Pretoria, the raids and rapid movements of De Wet and Botha and their destructive attacks upon his line of communication have proved them to be cavalry leaders of such eminent ability and spirit as was possessed in a greater degree by our own Southern generals Jackson and Morgan.

We found the people in the farm-house on the distant kopje quite hysterical over the near presence of the British, and the entire place in such an uproar that we slept out in the veldt. In the morning we were awakened by the sound of the Vickar-Maxim or the "pom-pom" as the English call it, or "bomb-Maxim" as the Boers call it. By any name it was a remarkable gun and the most demoralizing of any of the smaller pieces which have been used in this campaign. One of its

values is that its projectiles throw up sufficient dust to enable the gunner to tell exactly where they strike, and within a few seconds he is able to alter the range accordingly. In this way it is its own range-finder. Its bark is almost as dangerous as its bite, for its reports have a brisk, insolent sound like a postman's knock, or a cooper hammering rapidly on an empty keg, and there is an unexplainable mocking sound to the reports, as though the gun were laughing at you. The English Tommies used to call it very aptly the "hyena gun." I found it just as offensive from the rear as when I was with the British and in front of it.

From the top of a kopje we saw that the battle had at last begun and that the bridge was the objective point. The English came up in great lines and blocks and from so far away and in such close order that at first in spite of the khaki they looked as though they wore uniforms of blue. They advanced steadily, and two hours later when we had ridden to a kopje still nearer the bridge they were apparently in the same formation as when we had first seen them, only now farms that had lain far in their rear were over-run by them and they encom-

passed the whole basin. An army of twenty-five thousand men advancing in full view across a great plain appeals to you as something entirely lacking in the human element. You do not think of it as a collection of very tired, dusty, and perspiring men with aching legs and parched lips, but as an unnatural phenomenon, or a gigantic monster which wipes out a railway station, a corn-field, and a village with a single clutch of one of its tentacles. You would as soon attribute human qualities to a plague, a tidal wave, or a slowly slipping landslide. One of the tentacles composed of six thousand horse had detached itself and crossed the river below the bridge, where it was creeping up on Botha's right. We could see the burghers galloping before it toward Ventersburg. At the bridge General Botha and President Steyn stood in the open road and with uplifted arms waved the Boers back, calling upon them to stand. But the burghers only shook their heads and with averted eyes grimly and silently rode by them on the other side. They knew they were flanked, they knew the men in the moving mass in front of them were in the proportion of nine to one.

When you looked down upon the lines of the English Army advancing for three miles across the plain, one could hardly blame them. The burghers did not even raise their Mausers. One bullet, the size of a broken slate-pencil, falling into a block three miles across and a mile deep, seems so inadequate. It was like trying to turn back the waves of the sea with a blowpipe.

It is true they had held back as many at Colenso, but the defensive positions there were magnificent, and since then six months had passed, during which time the same thirty thousand men who had been fighting then were fighting still, while the enemy was always new, with fresh recruits and reinforcements arriving daily.

As the English officers at Durban, who had so lately arrived from home that they wore swords, used to say with the proud consciousness of two hundred thousand men back of them: "It won't last much longer now. The Boers have had their belly full of fighting. They're fed up on it; that's what it is; they're fed up."

They forgot that the Boers, who for three

General Botha.

months had held Buller back at the Tugela, were the same Boers who were rushed across the Free State to rescue Cronje from Roberts, and who were then sent to meet the relief column at Fourteen Streams, and were then ordered back again to harass Roberts at Sannahspost, and who, at last, worn out, stale, heartsick, and hopeless at the unequal odds and endless fighting, fell back at Sand River.

For three months thirty thousand men had been attempting the impossible task of endeavoring to meet an equal number of the enemy in three different places at the same time.

I have seen a retreat in Greece when the men, before they left the trenches, stood up in them and raged and cursed at the advancing Turk, cursed at their Government, at their King, at each other, and retreated with shame in their faces because they did so.

But the retreat of the burghers of the Free State was not like that. They rose one by one and saddled their ponies with the look in their faces of men who had been attending the funeral of a friend, and who were leaving just before

the coffin was swallowed in the grave. Some of them, for a long time after the greater number of the commando had ridden away, sat upon the rocks staring down into the sunny valley below them, talking together gravely, rising to take a last look at the territory which was their own. The shells of the victorious British sang triumphantly over the heads of their own artillery, bursting impotently in white smoke or tearing up the veldt in fountains of dust.

But they did not heed them. They did not even send a revengeful bullet into the approaching masses. The sweetness of revenge could not pay for what they had lost. They looked down upon the farm-houses of men they knew; upon their own farm-houses rising in smoke; they saw the Englishmen like a pest of locusts settling down around gardens and farm-houses still nearer, and swallowing them up.

Their companions, already far on the way to safety, waved to them from the veldt to follow; an excited doctor carrying a wounded man warned them that the English were just below them, storming the hill. "Our artillery is aiming at five hundred yards," he shouted, but still

they stood immovable, leaning on their rifles, silent, homeless, looking down without rage or show of feeling at the great waves of khaki sweeping steadily toward them, and possessing their land.

CHAPTER X

THE LAST DAYS OF PRETORIA

WHEN we had retreated for a mile and a half on the road to Ventersburg, the artillery also ceased firing and followed on the same road, and there was no longer any sound except the heavy booming of the English guns, which grew louder and louder as they were pushed forward in pursuit. The last possible chance left to the Boers to make a stand in the Free State had passed away. At Ventersburg we found Jones's Hotel empty and deserted, the Brooklyn landlady flown, and the rooms open and free to all comers. A black and white kitten had commandeered my room and was luxuriously stretching itself in the centre of the bed. In the stable-yard the Indian coolie who had been left in sole possession was sitting on an overturned bucket and weeping feebly. He was eighty years old and had been abandoned to his fate, which had been de-

scribed to him by a facetious bar-keeper as hanging or St. Helena. Outside in Ventersburg's only street the shopkeepers and their families were throwing clothes and food into trek wagons, and Cape carts, and their terrified Kaffir boys knelt in the dust unravelling tangled heaps of harness; others of their townspeople were already disappearing in a column of dust on the road to Kroonstad.

On the edge of the town a few men and women were watching the British shells reaching nearer and nearer. Their accents were those of the cockney colonial, and their faces were shining with triumphant, self-satisfied smiles. The men had put on their cricket blasers, the women their Jubilee brooches and had wound the ribbons of the Castle Line steamers around their straw hats. They had thrown off the mask and had at last declared themselves. They were waiting to welcome the conquerors.

Since five that morning we had eaten nothing, so we welcomed the lunch the Indian coolie gathered from the hotel and spread for us in the garden, and we lingered over it until a despatch-rider shouted to us over the garden

wall that the English shells were falling in the town and the English themselves were coming over the last hill.

The retreat upon Kroonstad lasted five hours and it was a remarkable and painful sight. In it there were young boys and old men, some of the men so old and feeble that when they left their ponies they were not able to walk without assistance. These were not the wounded, but the men who solely on account of their age had succumbed to the severities of the campaign. All of them, young and old, bore the reverse with the same impassiveness which we had grown to recognize as characteristic. They were never jubilant over their successes, attributing them rather to the kindness of the Lord, nor cast down and embittered by defeat. As we rode away from the battle I heard no one blamed for not having conducted it differently, and no one boasted of any particular act of his commando or of his own personal prowess. The retreating burghers stretched over the veldt for many miles, the trek wagons keeping to the trail and the mounted men riding alone or scattered in groups of from a half-dozen to fifty over every part of the level

Lord Roberts and Staff Entering the Outer Lines at Pretoria.

prairie. It was so casual and so unorganized but not disorganized a movement, that it was impossible to believe it was an army in retreat. The wagons with each from twelve to twenty oxen straggled along the trail in blocks of half a mile in length, and from behind kopjes and cornfields and out of dongas and hollows in the plain the cavalcades kept appearing and disappearing, so that as far as one could see on every hand were countless hundreds of mounted men all coming from a different point and all converging upon the trail to the capital. Toward sundown many of these began to outspan for the night, so that long after all sight of the trail was lost the light of their campfires and the smell of the burning wood and coffee and toasted meat and the odors of massed oxen and horses guided us to the right road to Kroonstad. The English entered Kroonstad the next day, the Boers having again retreated. There was one man, however, who remained and whose adventure deserves remembering. His name is Charlie Manyear, and he belonged to Blake's Irish Brigade. When the English cavalry entered the town he had lingered so long sampling the

bottles at the Grand Hotel, which had been abandoned, that he did not hear the soldiers approaching until they had halted in the street before the door. He saw he was caught if he did not act promptly, and with charming resource threw his bandolier, rifle, and coat under the bar, rolled up his sleeves, and began calmly serving drinks. When the troopers entered he hailed them with a glad shout of welcome and declared that they must drink with him and at the expense of the "house." He would take no denial. They made no violent objection to this offer, and he continued to play barkeeper until he declared he needed another box of whiskey from the store-room, and slipping out at the back mounted one of the troop horses and galloped after his friends.

The retreat continued for two weeks, the Boers falling back from one position to another, abandoning each without a fight. They surrendered—without any possible excuse for so doing—naturally fortified places like those at the Sand River and in the hills beyond the Vaal at the Klip River Station, and then, a few days later, they would gather together and come back again, when it was too late. It

was difficult at the time to understand why they acted as they did, and the series of retreats from Brandfort to Johannesburg are still to me quite incomprehensible. I was with the burghers during the greater part of this time, and certainly no one could have asked for a better position than the one they prepared to defend at Klip River and which, after they had further strengthened it with long lines of trenches, they abandoned without firing a shot. They did not seem to be frightened, nor demoralized. They were as calm and deliberate as though there were no English within five hundred miles, but they would not stand. Some said it was because, after the flanking of Cronje, the burghers were in constant expectation of being surrounded. Before the surrender of Cronje, during the days of "frontal attacks," they had had to consider only the force which they saw directly before them, but with Roberts they were never sure that other, unseen columns might not be coming around too to cut them off in the rear, and, as they dreaded being sent to St. Helena almost as keenly as death itself, it was impossible to hold them. Incidentally these retreats show the tremen-

dous value of discipline and that no amount of enthusiasm nor self-interest can succeed without it; that even an army composed of patriots —where each man is fighting without pay for his own farm and home and wife and children— may, if there is no discipline or acknowledged authority to make the men act in common, go completely to pieces at a critical moment.

Those Americans who see danger in a "standing army" of 60,000 men in a country of 70,000,000 and who would have us depend upon our citizen soldiery, should consider this question. I have seen undisciplined citizens of Greece throw the regiments of regulars into confusion by stampeding through their ranks to the rear, and the citizen soldiery of my own country as represented by the Seventy-first New York Volunteers funking the fight and refusing to join the regulars in the charge up San Juan Hill, and I have seen the citizen soldiery of the Boer republic refuse battles which might have turned into second Colensos, through their not having acquired the habit of obeying orders. At the Battle of Colenso the burghers wanted to fight, at the Sand and Vaal rivers they did not. Discipline would have

The First British Troops to Enter Pretoria.

allowed them no choice in the matter: they would have followed the orders of their officers, who were in this case Botha, De Wet, and President Steyn, all men of remarkable judgment, knowledge, and courage. What made the Boer retreat so exasperating was the fact that again and again they gathered in force and recaptured with a fight towns and positions which a week previous were in their own hands and which they had abandoned.

When the English shopkeepers began to give us our change in the paper currency of the Transvaal, we knew Lord Roberts was not far from Pretoria. When we preferred gold they said that the notes, which were torn in two and pinned together, were the only kind of money they possessed, and then grinned at us inquiringly, as though they asked: "What are you going to do about it?"

The signs of the times were further advertised in the altered appearance of the shop-windows of the Dutch and English firms. Where for weeks there had been photographs of Boer laagers and caricatures from Dutch

comic papers of English generals there were now chromo portraits of the Queen and the Prince of Wales, photographs of English actresses, English stationery, English sheet-music, and English books.

At the Pretoria Club English burghers who had cut the strings of champagne bottles to celebrate Colenso, Modder River, and Sannahspost, became prophets of disaster, foretelling that the end of the republic was at hand, and urged others, while there was yet time, to swear allegiance to the people who would rob them of their land. English burghers who never had entered the club before except in riding breeches and spurs, and after leaving a blanket, bandoleer, and rifle conspicuously in the hallway, now appeared in the sedate and sable garments of the advocate. When you spoke to one of these of the defence of the capital he looked over your head. His mind was deep in his law library: it had never, in fact, concerned itself with any matter more martial or more militant.

Those Englishmen of poor and little souls who had not dared to raise their voices during the days of the Boer triumphs now found them

again, now that an army of 35,000 Tommies was only a few miles distant. They began to swell and to swagger, taking the biggest chair in the smoking-room, the head of the table at luncheon, whispering and laughing together in corners. Each of these had made his fortune in the Transvaal; each of them held some post in her judiciary or owned a law-office in Vulture's Row. Boer money was paying for his children's education at the Model school, for the Scotch and soda at his elbow; Boer money enabled his wife to return every season to London to the place she always spoke of as home.

They were full burghers of the Transvaal, and as burghers it was their first duty to defend the republic. But the "foul and unkempt" Boer had, with long-suffering generosity and good feeling, absolved them from this duty to the country in which they had elected to live.

"I understand your position," the field cornet of Pretoria would say to them when he called them to his office, "and you must understand ours. You promised if we gave you full burgher rights that you would fight for the republic, and before you gave that promise

you should have considered that some day you might be called on to fight against your mother-country. However, it will be arranged. . Do not make any questions now, but take your bandoleer and rifle and go with the other burghers to the front. When you have shown your willingness to obey the constitution you will be recalled by telegraph."

And when the English burgher reached the front it was invariably the case that he found a telegram awaiting him in which he was instructed to return to Pretoria. On arriving there nothing more was asked of him than that he should assist in preserving good order at the capital by arresting Kaffir servants who were on the streets without a pass.

This consideration for the English-born burgher, which was always shown those who protested against being sent to fight their own countrymen, is an interesting commentary on the tales told us by the entire press of Great Britain, of how colonials and burghers, because they refused to join their commando, were kicked to death by the Boers. There were as many Englishmen kicked to death by the Boers, for that or any other reason, as there

English Officers Arriving at the Model School House.

were Catholic nuns blown from the mouths of cannon by Lord Roberts.

But these renegade Englishmen quickly forgot the consideration shown them, and were the first to declare that Pretoria could not be defended; the first to offer to go forth to meet Lord Roberts and surrender the city; the first to desert the people who had sheltered them when they came to them from the London law-courts, briefless, penniless, and hungry.

They ran crouching and grovelling to meet the new face at the door, the new step on the floor; they shouted aloud as they ran that they were not as other burghers were, and, to prove this, called for the death sentence of the republic which had befriended them. These were the creatures—neither fish nor fowl, certainly not men—who first repudiated their own country, then repudiated their adopted country, and "with a kiss betrayed her to her master."

During the week before the occupation of Pretoria it was impossible to learn definitely even then from the Government whether or not it intended to defend the capital. No one seemed to think it probable that it would do

so, but there were many of the Boer generals who were quoted as saying that it must be held. On the other hand, foreign military experts pronounced emphatically against it. They declared that to protect its enormous perimeter 25,000 men would be required. That was nearly the whole fighting force of the Transvaal when that force was near its greatest strength. There were no means of feeding such a force, and there was not in that short time any chance of collecting together the scattered and fleeing commandoes and bringing them back to Pretoria.

Another and a sentimental reason mediated largely against a siege. This was the regard in which Pretoria was held by the burghers for itself as their chosen city, as their capital. They could not bring themselves to think of it in ruins—of its Folksraad and Palace of Justice shattered, its churches, homes, and flower-gardens destroyed. They preferred rather that it should remain as they had known it, even though it fell into the hands of the enemy.

Up to the time that I left Pretoria, which was two days before Lord Roberts entered the capital, there was little excitement and no dis-

order. The inhabitants were really more concerned over the English soldiers who were imprisoned at Waterval than over those who were fighting their way toward us from Johannesburg. And they had some cause to be. Had 4,000 Tommies who had been caged for many months on a dirt compound suddenly broken loose and taken possession of Pretoria, with no officers to restrain them, one can only guess what might have happened.

The English prisoners, owing to the need of able-bodied burghers at the front, were guarded by old men and boys, and by only three hundred of these. The Tommies had grown entirely out of hand, and now, with the knowledge that help was near, were in a state of reckless unruliness which might lead to any outrage. At any moment a combined rush would have given freedom to nine-tenths of them, but the want of organization, or the lack of a leader, or the fear of each that he might be the tenth man, prevented their mobbing the few guards and making their escape. Once out they could have taken Pretoria empty-handed, for there were no burghers to defend it. Whatever I may think of their officers,

no one admires the courage, good humor, and discipline of the English privates and their non-commissioned officers more than myself.

But, knowing what I did of how they were acting at Waterval, and the temper, or loss of it, of the men there, I confess I considered their near presence to Pretoria a much more serious menace to the town than the advancing army of 35,000 disciplined men.

When Roberts reached Johannesburg, and his arrival at Pretoria within the next few days was obviously inevitable, our consul, Adelbert S. Hay, asked the Government that he might be allowed to take twenty of the British officers from their camp to the Tommies' camp at Waterval. He argued that if they reassumed command over their own men they could soon get them in hand, and that no outbreak would follow.

It was a most timely and excellent idea. It saved the English from the mortification which they might possibly have felt had the prisoners run amuck before Roberts arrived, and also allowed the shopkeepers and householders of Pretoria to sleep in peace, without fear of wak-

The English Tommies at Waterval.

ing in the morning to find the town in the hands, not of the enemy, but of a mob.

Indeed, at that time about the only busy men in Pretoria outside of the Boer cabinet was our consul, Adelbert S. Hay, and his vice-consul, Gardner F. Coolidge of Boston. They were acting for English subjects as well as for American citizens, and for over five thousand English prisoners, both civil and the military, and the calls upon them for assistance were many and constant, and involved the protection of life and of property of enormous value. Mr. Hay is a young man, and when the President selected him to fill the post abandoned by Mr. Macrum there were many at home who thought him too young to properly carry out duties which were not only consular but diplomatic. But from what I learned of his efforts from Americans, Boers, and British, and from what I saw daily of the work accomplished by him and Mr. Coolidge during the two months in which I was in Pretoria I can think of no one who would have filled the office more successfully or shown greater tact, kindness, and diplomacy, nor worked as unremittingly. Many Americans, whose business had been interrupted by the

war, wives who were separated from their husbands at the front, and owners of property who were forced to leave it in the care of the American consul found, in their need, Mr. Hay and Mr. Coolidge to be the best of friends, and the aid they gave to their fellow-countrymen came from the heart, and largely from their own pockets. The English people owe Mr. Hay a debt of gratitude for the care he took of the health and welfare of their imprisoned soldiers which they can hardly hope to repay, and the American Government has great reason to feel gratified at the manner in which he reflected credit upon the administration and upon himself.

I returned to Pretoria a week before it fell, and found the capital completely indifferent to its fate. I heard of one man who in preparation for the siege had laid in a store of forage, and of another who bought tinned meats in sufficient quantities to feed his family for three months, but no one else I knew seemed to take the approach of the British seriously. This was not because they did not care, but because the Boer does not wear his heart upon his sleeve, and treats all fortunes with stoical calm.

R. H. Davis. Adelbert S. Hay, U. S. Consul. J. G. Coolidge, Vice-Consul.

The United States Consul to Pretoria.

There was still enough to eat in the town, although prices rose daily. Sugar, however, was exhausted, and sewing thread. These two commodities, however, were the only things that money could not obtain. Up to the very last the Boer residents gave concerts for the benefit of the sick and wounded, at which one could hear the best classical music excellently played and sung. The Boer children continued to go to school and to shout in the square at recess, the wives of the officials to call and return calls, and each afternoon the carriages of the wives of the foreign residents stood in front of the stores in the "shopping" district, while their husbands met as usual in the cool seclusion of the Pretoria Club. Nine months had passed since the optimistic guard at Waterloo Station had closed the carriage-door on the departing British officers, and convulsed England by wittily calling "All aboard for Pretoria." Since then many of the officers had reached Pretoria with little difficulty, but the fact that the bulk of them were only a few miles distant from the city toward which for a year they had been fighting their way, affected the inhabitants of London much more deeply than the

residents of Pretoria itself. One has so few chances of being inside the capital of a nation when a hostile army has advanced to within a day's march of it, that the conduct of the citizens of Pretoria was most disappointing. One wanted them to hold public meetings, to loot the shops, or in some way to show emotion and a proper regard for the dramatic possibilities of the situation. But the Boers, both official and unofficial, maintained the best of good order, and the affairs of life went smoothly forward without heat, bustle, or excitement.

Two days before Johannesburg was taken the Boers began a great trek through Pretoria on their way to the Lydenburg Mountains. From early in the morning and all through the night one could hear the rumble and creak of the ox-carts and the shrieks and shouts of the Kaffir drivers, and all day long one met in every street a broken stream of burghers ambling along alone or in groups, and all moving toward the hills where the last stand was to be made and the guerilla warfare begun. The President and his cabinet followed them at seven o'clock in the evening on the first of June, and the gold to carry on the business of

the Government at the new capital at Machadodorp was shipped after them the same evening. It was conveyed in public cabs from the Palace of Justice, where it had been stored, and unloaded into a freight-car. There were no guards to protect the treasure, and the Kaffir boys who drove the cabs assisted in removing the gold and carrying it to the car. It was a remarkable sight. It was midnight, and the scene was lit only by a few of the station lamps. The gold was in bars worth two hundred and fifty dollars each, and had been bundled into the cabs and tucked under the seats and piled on top of them and at the feet of the drivers. Before leaving the station for another load the negro boys would lift up the cushions of the seats and feel about behind the flaps to discover if any bars had been overlooked. One boy drove away to some little distance before he noticed that there was a bar still resting under his foot. He came back, tossed it to one of the station hands and the man threw it into the car. The next day the burghers began to commandeer all the horses for "remounts," and those drivers who were so unlucky as not to own mules, abandoned their cabs by the side-

walks. In a few hours the streets looked as deserted as lower Broadway on a Sunday morning. On the day following the firing of the cannon between us and Johannesburg was faintly audible, and every minute we were told that the English had entered the city, and were marching up to take possession of the public buildings.

Near the railway station there was a great zinc building in which were stored enormous quantities of rations belonging to the Government. These formed the base supply for the men at the front, but the Government, sooner than see these fall into the hands of the English, directed the Boer officials who had been detailed to remain in Pretoria to allow the burghers who were passing through the town to Lydenburg to break open the building and to help themselves. They did so and everyone else in the town helped himself under the pretence of helping the burghers. For hours, women and children, Kaffirs, burghers, Outlanders, shopkeepers, and ladies and gentlemen who needed the food no more than they did shoes and stockings, surrounded the building, ripped open the zinc sides, and staggered away

Boer Retreat from Pretoria.

laden with all the coffee, sugar, flour, and candles they could carry. I saw one of the Dutch engineers of the railroad with five ten-pound boxes of coffee hung about him by ropes, so that he looked like a strong man giving an exhibition at the Music Hall. Until late in the afternoon Kaffirs and white men together struggled over enormous sacks of flour and sugar until the streets were covered with the contents of the broken bags, and the Kaffir women began scooping the sugar up out of the gutters and filling their aprons. The English residents pointed out the scene to me as one of unlicensed looting, but they knew perfectly well that the rations belonged to the Government, that the building had been thrown open to the burghers and that the burghers were only taking their own. The Outlanders, the English shopkeepers, the Hebrews, the Kaffirs, and the Dutch looted, but the burghers had as much right to the stuff as to the family Bible on the centre-table. The burghers, however, were greatly distressed at the scene of disorder and were chagrined to think what capital would be made of it. They were especially anxious that no photo-

graphs should be taken of the scene, as they foresaw that the English would misrepresent the incident and report it as another disgraceful act of Boer barbarism. As a matter of history, although guards were set at the banks and other precautions taken, no private stores were looted. The only stores that were entered were those belonging to the Jew dealers around the railroad station, who had been among the first to loot the rations, and the burghers followed them into their shops and removed the food which they had carried there.

I did not see the entry of Lord Roberts. The event did not seem sufficiently important to repay for the sacrifice. The triumphal entry of the German Army into Paris, I should like to have seen. That was the climax of a great war between two powerful and equally matched peoples, and Paris, even in her moment of humiliation, is one of the two cities of the world. The event itself was magnificent and historical. But the entrance of the Guards and the Highlanders, the C. I.V's, the Imperial Yeomanry, and twenty thousand other troops with Lord Roberts at their head into the undefended village capital of a tiny republic is not a feat of

arms that I personally cared to witness, nor to describe. All I could have said of them was what the lady vindictively called after the burglar who had just swept her jewelry from her dressing-table, "I think you might be in a better business."

One feels all sorrow and all respect for the Tommies who have fallen by the Boer rifle, for those boy officers who each week in the illustrated papers smile at us from the past, those young men who though they served in an unjust war waged without tolerance and without intelligence gave up their lives for the Empire and with cheerful unselfishness and reckless courage died nobly though in an ignoble cause. But when Lord Roberts and his army fling out the black flag and go forth under it on a Jameson Raid, when they murder old men and young boys because they fight for their homes, the best that they can ask of everyone is silence as to their misdeeds and that their triumph may be crowned with oblivion. When they enter the capital of some great power which they have conquered, when they march into Berlin, Paris, or Petersburg, I certainly hope I may be there to chronicle such a real

victory, but I object to being called out on a false alarm.

I left Pretoria with every reason for regret. I had come to it a stranger and had found friends among men whom I had learned to like for themselves and for their cause. I had come prejudiced against them, believing them to be all the English press and my English friends had painted them; semi-barbarous, uncouth, money-loving, and treacherous in warfare. I found them simple to the limit of their own disadvantage, magnanimous to their enemies, independent and kindly. I had heard much of the corruption of their officials, and I saw daily their chief minister of state at a time when every foreign resident was driving through Pretoria in a carriage, passing to and from the government buildings in a tram-car, their President living in a white-washed cottage, their generals serving for months at the front without pay and without hope of medals or titles. Their ignorance of the usages and customs of the great world outside of their own mountains, for which the English held them in such derision, harmed no one so greatly as it harmed themselves. Had they known the outside

Pretoria Square Occupied by the British.

world, had they been able to overcome their distrust of the foreigner, had they understood in what way to make use of him, how to manipulate the press of the world to tell the truth in their behalf as cleverly as the English had used it to misrepresent them, had they known how to make capital of the sympathies of the French, the Americans, and the Germans and to turn it to their own account, had they known which men to send abroad to tell the facts, to plead and to explain, had they known which foreign adventurer was the one to follow implicitly on the battle-field and which to "vootsak" to the border, had they been men of the world instead of farmers in total ignorance of it, they might have brought about intervention, or an honorable peace. The very unworldliness of the Boer at which the Englishman sneers, did much, I believe, to save Great Britain from greater humiliations, from more frequent "reverses" and more costly defeats.

As our train drew out of Pretoria we had no certain knowledge that the Boer Government had not destroyed the railroad track between the old and the new capital which lay

walks. In a few hours the streets looked as deserted as lower Broadway on a Sunday morning. On the day following the firing of the cannon between us and Johannesburg was faintly audible, and every minute we were told that the English had entered the city, and were marching up to take possession of the public buildings.

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seat in the saddle, and with the rifle rising above them like the lance of the crusader. They are the last of the crusaders. They rode out to fight for a cause as old as the days of Pharaoh and the children of Israel, against an enemy ten times as mighty as was Washington's in his war for independence. As I see it it has been a Holy War, this war of the burgher crusader, and his motives are as fine as any that ever called "a minute man" from his farm, or sent a knight of the Cross to die for it in Palestine. Still, in spite of his cause the Boer is losing and in time his end may come, and he may fall. But when he falls he will not fall alone; with him will end a great principle—the principle for which our forefathers fought—the right of self-government, the principle of independence.

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